

Dusty Miller

A useful, drought-tolerant perennial with evergreen (or rather ever-grey) foliage, its serrated, pinnately cut leaves make the Dusty Miller interesting in rock gardens as well as creating a bright contrast in plant beds. It grows wild along the Mediterranean coast, from where it has a resistance to salinity. To keep it neat and tidy, it should be cut back by the end of winter, and if necessary by mid-summer, to remove the faded flowers. These are not produced during the first year; however, they are insignificant, and by no means what the plant is grown for. Low humidity is no problem and a little frost is tolerated without any damage. If neglected, the plants may become leggy in time and require cutting back to grow new attractive shoots. A variety called 'Silverdust' is more compact and has silvery-white leaves. It also has fewer flowers than the species. Propagation is very easy, from cuttings. The stems are stiff and branch from the base. They make excellent cuttings for propagating the plant quickly. Dusty Millers do well in well-drained soil with frequent irrigation. Deep rooting allows established plants to tolerate some drought. Under ideal conditions, they may reach 1 metre in height and 1.4 metres in width, but in Arriyadh, where they are to be seen in both private gardens and public open spaces, these woody perennials remain about half this size. Pinching helps the plant to grow more compactly. They have low maintenance requirements and are pest-free. Wet conditions may cause a fungal infection called rust disease.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Vigour	: slow-growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: cuttings
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1800 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

SHAPE

Type	: perennial, biennial
Height	: 0.15 m-1 m
Spread	: 0.15 m-1.4 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: yellow
Size	: 1.2 cm - 1.5 cm
Period	: April - June

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: achene
Fruit size	: 0.4 cm