

## Purple Heart, *Purple Queen*

Known as Purple Heart or Purple Queen, this herbaceous plant is widely distributed for its colourful qualities. The species is indigenous to eastern Mexico, where its green foliage is flushed with red for protection in full sun. In cultivation, a variety named 'Purpurea' is usually found, with dull foliage in deep purple when it is grown in full sun. Less light is accepted, but the colour will fade to greenish-red. The plant blankets open areas with fleshy stems that root at the nodes to form a dense mat between 10 cm and 15 cm high, and somewhat higher where it can lean on walls or neighbouring plants. Its width is permanently spread when the twigs touch the ground for rooting. The leaves measure between 8 cm and 12 cm in length. In summer, small pink flowers are borne at the tips, which are pointed upwards. They look attractive, but do not appear in abundance. After flowering, the shoots may be pinched to encourage denser growth. In Arriyadh, the foliage is evergreen unless the site is exposed to frosts. However, plants recover from dying back when weather turns warmer in spring. In adverse conditions, the plant may also be grown in pots or containers, and makes an ideal plant in hanging baskets. It is very easy to multiply by cuttings, either in water or in compost, but it should be borne in mind that the sap may cause irritation to sensitive skin. Purple Hearts perform best in well-drained, fertile soil with frequent watering. On the other hand, they are widely adaptable, tolerating poor soil, some drought and even neglect.



### GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

### CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2500 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

### SHAPE

Type	: perennial
Height	: 0.1 m-0.15 m
Spread	: 0.5 m-2 m
Foliage	: evergreen

### FLOWER

Colour	: pink
Size	: 1.3 cm
Period	: May - August

### FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.4 cm