Acalypha pendula

Edward F. Gilman

Introduction

This ground hugging, fine textured relative of the more common Chenille Plant grows no more than several inches tall (Fig. 1). In the full sun it forms a thick canopy of tiny, serrated leaves no more than 3/4 inches long by ½ inches wide. Bright red, fussy flowers stand erect above the foliage like soldiers in a field.

General Information

Scientific name: Acalypha pendula
Pronunciation: ack-uh-LIFE-uh PEN-dyoo-luh
Common name(s): Dwarf Chenille Plant
Family: Euphorbiaceae
Plant type: ground cover
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: hanging basket; ground cover; cascading down a wall
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 0 to .5 feet
Spread: depends upon supporting structure
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Figure 1. Dwarf Chenille Plant.
Acalypha pendula -- Dwarf Chenille Plant

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Well suited for a hanging basket, Chenille Plant will cascade nicely over a wall if planted close to the edge on top of the wall. The plant makes a good ground cover provided...
people are kept off. Like ivy, it tolerates foot traffic poorly. The small stature and slow growth make it a nice addition to a rock garden or other small-scale landscape design.

Chenille Plant performs well in many types of well-drained soils. It grows and flowers best in full sun, with little care other than occasional irrigation needed to maintain the plant once it is established.

**Pests and Diseases**

There are no diseases of major concern associated with Chenille Plant. Scales, mites and aphids may be troublesome pests in some landscapes, especially when grown in partial shade.