

Hypoestes phyllostachya1

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Introduction

Polka-dot Plant (also known as *Hypoestes sanquinolenta*) is grown for its pink, red or white mottled and speckled foliage (Fig. 1). This loosely branched perennial may reach a height of 12 to 18 inches. The variegated, dark green leaves are ovate in shape and are generally 2 ½ inches long. The lavender or blue flowers occur in terminal and axillary cymes during the summer season. However, the flowers are negligible in comparison to the brightly spotted foliage. Foliage coloration is often more pronounced in a shaded location.

General Information

Scientific name: *Hypoestes phyllostachya*

Pronunciation: hye-PESS-teez fil-loe-STACK-ee-uh

Common name(s): Polka-Dot Plant

Family: Acanthaceae
Plant type: ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2) **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; ground cover; border; edging; cascading

down a wall

Availablity: somewhat available, may have to go out of the

region to find the plant

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

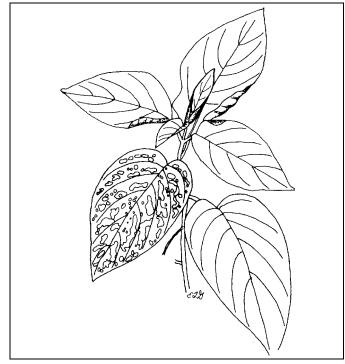


Figure 1. Polka-Dot Plant.

Plant density: dense Growth rate: fast Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf margin: entire **Leaf shape:** ovate

Leaf venation: brachidodrome; pinnate **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change **Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

Flower color: lavender; blue

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering;

fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit Fruit length: no fruit Fruit cover: no fruit Fruit color: not applicable

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 the shade

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: Soil salt tolerances: poor Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features

and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The Polka-dot Plant is very useful for a mass display but will also create a nice edging along a shaded walk or patio. Many people place it into a container for display on the deck or patio. Shade tolerance also makes it well suited for placing a container full of Polka-dot Plant inside the home. In northern and central Florida, plants grown in the spring and summer garden may be dug in the fall and taken indoors.

This perennial is generally grown in partial to full shade on moist, well-drained, acid soils. Bright, filtered light brings out more color, but strong, direct sun is hard on the species; the leaves curl in full sun and they loose color.

New cultivars, such as those in the 'Splash Select' series and 'Confetti' series have brighter colors on more compact plants. 'Rose Splash Select' maintains very dark coloration in full sun, whereas other Polka-dot plants fade.

The Polka-dot Plant is easily grown from seed or cuttings. Plants grown in the garden will often reseed naturally, but seedlings may produce foliage that is not as attractive.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.