

Lantana montevidensis (Weeping Lantana)

Botanical Bytes by Bruner

By Gregory Bruner

Foliage Height: 18-24”
Foliage Width: 60-120”
Flower Height: 18-24”
Foliage Color: Green
Flower Color: Lavender
USDA Hardiness: 8-10
Moisture: Average to Dry
Light: Full Sun – Part Sun



Lantana montevidensis is one of the popular choices plant breeders have used in the creation of many of the Lantana cultivars. Its shorter height and lavender flower color are two sought-after characteristics by gardeners, and breeders strive to incorporate these features into cultivars.

This wonderful perennial ground cover originally was found in warm regions of South America. Lantana has adapted to the southern United States readily because the climate closely mimics its natural range. Weeping Lantana is hardy only to USDA Zone 8. If temperatures regularly drop below 20 degrees during the winter, the plant is considered an annual.

Lantana montevidensis most commonly is called Weeping Lantana, but it sometimes is known as Creeping Lantana, Purple Lantana, or Trailing-shrub Verbena.

This plant does not require much attention. Fertilizing and watering weeping lantana too much will actually reduce flowering. Its aggressive roots thrive in a well-drained site but are able to adapt to a wide range of soils. Weeping lantana, when not in hanging baskets, may be used as a low mounding ground cover that could spread as far as 6-10 feet in one growing season, depending on the climate in which it is growing.

This Lantana adapts to tolerate full sun, reflected heat, smog, and poor soil, making it an excellent choice for urban settings. Its tolerance of salt and heat make it well suited for xeriscaping or the beach. Its rough-textured leaves take on a wonderful purplish tinge during periods of cool weather.

While the distinctive aroma of the foliage means deer rarely disturb Lantana, it is good for attracting other wildlife. Butterflies of all sizes enjoy the nectar of its colorful flowers. The blue/black berries appeal to many types of birds; however, some varieties have been bred to produce fewer berries because of spread into wild areas.

Medically speaking, Lantana montevidensis has been used in a number of different medicines. It has been added as an ingredient in antipyretic medication (to lower a person's temperature if a fever is present), carminatives (to help relieve gas), and medications for respiratory infections (such as cough, colds, asthma, and bronchitis). There have also been studies concerning using this Lantana as a microbacterial agent.

This lesser-known species still shares the traits of heat and drought tolerance with Lantana camara, while providing a lower profile in the garden. Cultivars of Lantana montevidensis are a wonderful choice for gardeners who like a low maintenance, easy-to-care-for perennial that attracts butterflies in the south.