

Mountain Astilbe *Astilbe biternata*

Plant Type: Native Perennial Wildflower

Sun Exposure: Part Sun, Shade

Season of Interest: Spring, Summer

Bloom Time: June through August

Bloom Color: White, Pink

Height: 20 to 40 in.

Spread: 28 in.

Spacing: 30 in.

Water Needs: Average

Maintenance: Very Little

Soil Type: Clay, Loam

Soil pH: Acidic, Neutral

Soil Drainage: Well Drained

Pests: None

Diseases: None

Wildlife: Bees, Butterflies



Description: Mountain astilbe is a herbaceous flowering perennial native to eastern North America. It does best in fertile moist soils that are well-drained but consistently moist. It is deer and rabbit resistant and black walnut tolerant.

The floral display is exceptional with a plume-shaped inflorescence of hundreds of tiny white or pink flowers held above the large leaves in late spring to early summer. There is plenty of nectar to attract many pollinators. Its showy floral display is exceptional and very unusual for a shade plant. It works

well as a background plant in perennial planting beds, in woodland or shade gardens and makes for excellent cut flowers. For more information see: plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/astilbe-biternata.

Care and Growing Tips: Astilbe plants grow best in part shade but can also grow in full sun or full shade. Astilbe will bloom in full shade, but the plants prefer some sunlight to achieve their full size. In hot weather and dry soils, the foliage will burn in full sun; here, some relief from the afternoon sun is necessary. Astilbe plants prefer rich, moist soil, with a pH of around 6.0. The warmer the weather, the more moisture astilbe plants need, especially when situated in full sun. They do not handle prolonged periods of drought well; the leaves will brown and dry, and if left dry too long, the plants will die. In the absence of rain, water astilbe weekly and deeply at the base, avoiding overhead watering. Astilbe plants are tough and hardy plants that can survive winter, even in harsh climates.

Astilbe plants need phosphorus to bloom, so choose a fertilizer with the makeup of 5-10-5 or 10-10-10. Rake the fertilizer into the soil two weeks before you plant or sprinkle a few granules onto the soil after the astilbe has been planted. Once the plant is established, fertilize every spring when the soil is moist. Little maintenance is required of astilbe plants. The flower heads will dry on the plant and remain attractive for many months. The flowers can be cut whenever they start to look ragged or left up for winter interest and cut back in the spring.

