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Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

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Barleria cristata: Crested Philippine Violet, Philippine Violet[1]

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This Florida-Friendly Landscaping publication is part of a series originally written by Edward F. Gilman.
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Introduction

The crested Philippine violet is an upright herbaceous perennial with a height of 6 feet and spread of 4 feet (Figure 1). Leaf tissue is dark green, puckered around the veins, which appear recessed, and has a medium texture (Figure 2). The plant remains dense in the full sun, creating a nice barrier planting. White or lavender funnel-shaped flowers appear on the new growth of this plant in the late summer and early fall (Figures 3, 4, and 5). The showy flowers and evergreen leaves make this plant a nice addition to the landscape. In addition, Philippine violet is very low maintenance and drought tolerant. This plant is well suited for use as a hedge, foundation planting, or border in landscaping beds.



Figure 1. Full form—*Barleria cristata*: Philippine violet.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Barleria cristata*: Philippine violet.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Flower—*Barleria cristata*: Philippine violet.
Credit: Keighly Graves, UF/IFAS



Figure 4. Flower—*Barleria cristata*: Philippine violet.
Credit: Shivlal via AdobeStock



Figure 5. Flower—*Barleria cristata*: Philippine violet.
Credit: polyyim via AdobeStock

General Information

Scientific name: *Barleria cristata*

Pronunciation: bar-LEER-ee-uh kriss-STAY-tuh

Common name(s): crested Philippine violet, Philippine violet, bluebell barleria, barleria

Family: *Acanthaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 9A through 11B (Figures 6 and 7)

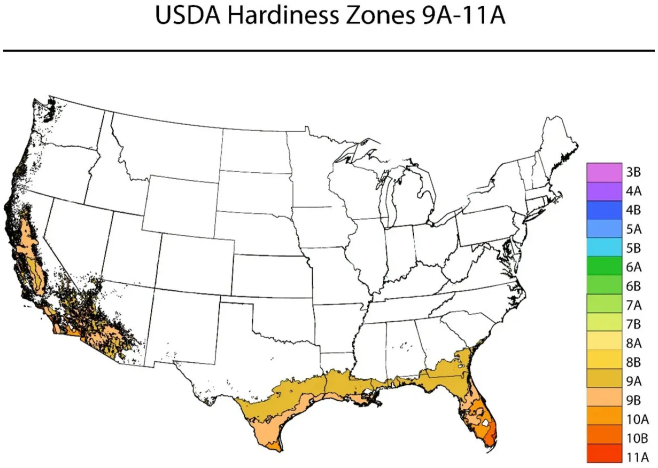


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 9A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

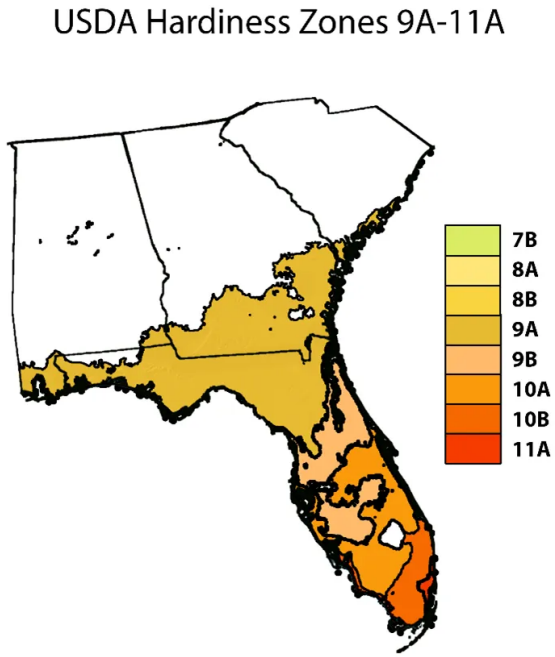


Figure 7. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 9A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zones 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: native to temperate Asia and tropical Asia

Invasive potential: not considered a problem species at this time

Uses: superior hedge; foundation; border

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Spread: 3 to 4 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: bowed; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; purple; white

Flower characteristic: fall flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: capsule

Fruit length: less than 1 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun; plant grows in partial shade

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

Drought tolerance: moderate to high

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: evergreen foliage adds winter interest

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

Use and Management

Philippine violet thrives in full sun to partial shade locations. This drought tolerant plant adapts to a variety of soil conditions; however, it prefers well-drained soil. In the northern hardiness zones, this plant will die back in the winter. Pruning this plant to the ground each spring encourages a fuller growth habit. When pruning, remove the dead foliage and stems, and new growth will emerge in the spring from the base of the stems. Wear gloves when cleaning up this plant in the spring; the leaves become coarse after freezing and could irritate exposed skin.

Philippine violet is a good background or specimen plant or may be used as a mass planting. It can also be used for a hedge or border planting to create a wall effect in a garden or landscape. It will stay small enough for use along a house foundation, provided it is not placed in front of a low window. Care should be used when locating this plant in the landscape, as it readily reseeds and may move outside the intended area of cultivation.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Design Considerations

The crested Philippine violet is a versatile herbaceous perennial with dark green, medium-textured foliage and white or lavender flowers that make it suitable for various landscape designs, including as a hedge, foundation planting, or border. Its uniform growth habit lends itself well to formal gardens where it can create structured patterns, while its natural appearance allows it to blend seamlessly into informal perennial and cottage gardens. This plant also thrives in tropical-themed gardens alongside ferns and palms, adding a sense of exotic flair. When integrating it into any design, consider pairing it with plants that have contrasting foliage colors and staggered bloom times to create continuous visual interest.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.

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