Winter Chocolate Heather

Calluna vulgaris 'Winter Chocolate'



Winter Chocolate Heather foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 6 inches

Flower Height: 8 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Other Names: Scotch Heather, Ling Heather

Description:

A variety with spikes of lilac pink bell-shaped flowers and golden foliage that bronzes in winter; great as a color contrasting groundcover; very particular about growing conditions, needs acidic organic soil, will die in anything else

Ornamental Features

Winter Chocolate Heather features tiny spikes of lavender bell-shaped flowers at the ends of the branches from mid summer to mid fall. It has attractive gold evergreen foliage which emerges pink in spring. The needles are highly ornamental and turn coppery-bronze in the fall, which persists throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Winter Chocolate Heather is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a mounded form. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting bees to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Winter Chocolate Heather is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Winter Chocolate Heather will grow to be only 6 inches tall at maturity extending to 8 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. It requires an evenly moist well-drained soil for optimal growth, but will die in standing water. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have sandy, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider covering it with a thick layer of mulch in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Winter Chocolate Heather makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers and foliage against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.