



Dusty Miller Planting Guide

About Dusty Miller

Dusty Miller, also known as silverdust or silver ragwort, is a low-growing, mounding perennial that has made a name for itself due to its fuzzy, silvery foliage. The color of this plant is so special, you'll want to dot your patio with Dusty Miller in containers so you can truly enjoy it up close.

When to Plant

Ten to 15 weeks before your first frost, begin your Dusty Miller seeds indoors. Do not cover your seeds with soil, just press down with your thumb for good seed-to-soil contact. Keep your soil moist and with temps between 65°F and 75°F, you should see germination in just under two weeks. This plant can tolerate some frost, but be sure to plant out your seedlings when temps are at least 40°F to 60°F outside. Southwestern states in zones 7 through 10 can appreciate Dusty Miller as a perennial, while northern states will enjoy it as an annual.

Where to Plant

Hardy in zones 7 through 10, though with protection may survive as low as zone 5, Dusty Miller thrives in a full sun location. Loving that hot, bright location in well-draining soil, Dusty Miller will be right at home in either garden beds, borders, or rock gardens and even xeriscape gardens where it can tolerate some drought. Consider planting Dusty Miller in containers to flank your front entryway, or in practically maintenance-free pots down by the pool. Cooler zones may prefer planting in pots so they can be brought inside to winterize. This plant does not thrive in shade, where foliage becomes sparse and leggy.

How to Plant

Once seedlings are established, plant them 10 to 12 inches apart. We are often deceived when planting small seedlings, but these plants will leaf out to about a 9- to 12-inch spread and will need that room for good airflow. Dusty Miller will benefit from a dressing of compost at planting, but it also does well in average, well-drained soil. Once established, Dusty Miller is easily propagated by cutting two- to three-inch stems with a leaf or two and placing them directly in potting soil.

Caring for Dusty Miller

Dusty Miller occasionally suffers from rust. To combat this, space plants with enough room for airflow to move freely, drying out wet leaves before they are left to languish. Established plants grow no taller than about two feet tall. To promote a more bushy habit, pinch ½ to 1 inch off each growing tip while the plant is still small. New stems will grow from each pinched spot.

Midsummer pruning is also recommended. If you can stomach it, shear the plant down by ⅓ and it will come back healthier than before. Another method, and one we prefer, is to prune the longest stems back to its lowest spot just above a leaf or leaf node. This will encourage growth at the cut and provide a more natural look. Dusty Miller does produce yellow flowers, but many gardeners choose to pinch these off to send all energy to the foliage that we love so much.