

PURPLE SHAMROCK

Oxalis triangularis



Characteristics

- Type: Perennial
- Common Name: Purple shamrocks, purple oxalis
- Zone: 4-10
- Height: 10"-12"
- Sun: Full, Partial
- Soil: Well-drained
- Flower: Small, white or pink
- Use: Landscape, houseplant

Culture

Oxalis triangularis is also known as love plant or purple shamrock. It's a low growing, bulbous perennial characterized by scores of dark purple, triangular leaflets and delicate, tiny white blooms. The leaves, roots, and flowers of the plant are edible, with the spring-blooming flowers making particularly lovely salad garnishes. The plant has a clump-forming habit and rarely grows to heights of more than 12 inches. A native of Brazil, purple shamrock may be planted outdoors in U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 6 to 10, or indoors where it thrives as a houseplant as long as it receives ample light.

Noteworthy Characteristic

The colorful foliage and flowers will be a welcome addition to any indoor or outdoor environment. At an average height of about 10 to 12 inches, the *Oxalis* is a good choice as a groundcover. Choose a location with well-draining soil for your purple shamrock. Plant them outdoors in full sunlight or semi-light shade, but make sure indoor plants get bright light. Do not choose an area that's prone to flooding, as this will quickly rot your new bulbs. Water with a watering can or garden hose to saturate the soil without flooding it. Purple shamrock bulbs love moisture but will rot if allowed to sit in soil that is too wet. Check new sprouts occasionally for common pests such as spider mites and leaf miners, which prey on new foliage. Sprouts appear in approximately 14 days, and flowers generally appear in 8 to 10 weeks.

Garden Uses

Purple shamrock plant can be grown successfully either as a houseplant or as part of your garden landscape. It doesn't like wet feet.

Problems

Purple shamrock is susceptible to fungal problems such as powdery mildew, rust, and fungal leaf spot, particularly if grown in an overly wet, shady environment