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Oregon Grape

Mahonia aquifolium

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 5b

Other Names: Oregon Grape Holly

Description:

A very interesting mounded shrub with leathery, sharp holly-shaped leaves; showy yellow flowers in spring and very attractive purple grape-like fruit in late summer; somewhat fussy, needs moist acid soils, some shade and protection from winter winds



Oregon Grape flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Oregon Grape is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent blue berries from mid summer to early fall. It features showy racemes of fragrant yellow flowers hanging below the branches in early spring. It has dark green evergreen foliage which emerges burgundy in spring. The spiny pinnately compound leaves turn an outstanding coppery-bronze in the fall, which persists throughout the winter.



Oregon Grape in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Oregon Grape is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and can be pruned at anytime. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering

Oregon Grape is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Oregon Grape will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub performs well in both full sun and full shade. However, you may want to keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, 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 applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.



Oregon Grape foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder