Society Garlic

Tulbaghia violacea

Height: 20 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Spacing: 12 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

A fast growing, clumping plant with narrow, strap like leaves that smell strongly of garlic when bruised; lovely lilac colored flowers in mid summer persist into fall; ideal for an herb garden, or containers

Edible Qualities

Society Garlic is a perennial herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The entire above-ground parts of the plant are edible, and are usually harvested from early summer to early fall. The edible parts have a mild taste and a distinctive fragrance.

The plant is most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Cooking

Features & Attributes

Society Garlic features showy spikes of fragrant lilac purple star-shaped flowers with pink overtones rising above the foliage from mid summer to early fall, which emerge from distinctive purple flower buds. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive fragrant grassy leaves remain green in color throughout the season.



Society Garlic in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Society Garlic flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with a mounded form. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Society Garlic is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting



Society Garlic in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Society Garlic will grow to be about 16 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 18 inches. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 12 inches apart. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Society Garlic is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.