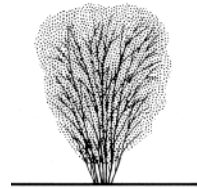


Hibiscus syriacus - Rose-of-Sharon or Shrub Althea (*Malvaceae*)

Hibiscus syriacus is a shrub with large showy flowers in single- or double-flowering form. Rose-of-Sharon has flowers with solid colors or bicolors that bloom all summer long and has a distinctive vase-shaped growth habit.

Form



-medium growth rate

Culture

-full sun to partial shade
-prefers moist, well-drained soils supplemented with organic matter in full sun, but is very adaptable to various soils, soil pHs, soil compaction, drought, heavy pruning, and pollution (and is therefore urban tolerant)

-propagated primarily by rooted stem cuttings, but also by seeds

-Mallow Family, with a few minor leaf disease and pest problems; however, old shrubs can develop trunk cankers that may eventually prove fatal to the plant

-abundantly available, in container and B&B form

Foliage

-green, alternate, broadly ovate, palmately veined, 3" long leaves have 3 distinct lobes with sparsely dentate to crenate margins

-yellowish green autumn color is poor

Flowers

-solid colors of white, red, purple, mauve, violet, or blue, or bicolors with a different colored throat, depending upon cultivar
-continuous blooms often occur from July through Sept., and usually close at night
-the 4" wide, single- or double-flowering, large-petaled, very showy flowers adorn the plant throughout the summer

Fruits

-green to brown, ornamentally unattractive 5-valved dehiscent capsules are persistent throughout much of the winter on older cultivars; most modern cultivars are virtually fruitless

-if fruit capsules are present, they will shatter over the course of the dormant season and spread their easily germinating seeds around the base of the parent plant, forming colonies with time if in

FEATURES

-medium-sized ornamental shrub (can also be limbed up into small tree form)
-maturing at about 8' tall x 4' wide
-upright vased growth habit, often becoming arching with age if never pruned



naturalized or neglected areas

Twigs

-thin and gray, white-lenticled, with raised leaf scars and small buds

-stems and branches do not branch very much unless pruned, resulting in many long, straight stems that originate from about 0.5-1.5' above the ground that give rise to the overall vased shape

Trunk

-white-gray and relatively smooth, branching very near to the ground unless limbed up into tree form

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Function

-specimen, foundation, entranceway, row, or border shrub, or planted as a formal or informal hedge
-occasionally limbed up into small tree form

Texture

-medium texture in foliage and when bare
-average density in foliage and when bare

Assets

-showy flowers bloom throughout the entire summer
-vase-shaped growth habit
-urban tolerant (especially to heat, humidity, drought, and poor soils)
-relatively rapid establishment

Liabilities

-spent flowers will close up and shrivel, but take several days to abscise from the plant
-with maturity, flexible plant stems become weighted under the load of prolific summer flowers, and bend over halfway to the ground
-older cultivars that set heavy seed crops can self-sow to form a weedy colony of young shrubs
-with advanced age, trunks may develop cankers that cause individual branches to die, followed by decline and death of the entire plant
-poor autumn color

Habitat

-Zones 5 to 8
-Native to China and India

SELECTIONS

Alternates

-shrubs that flower in summer (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*, *Clethra alnifolia*, *Hydrangea* species, *Itea virginica*, *Philadelphus* species, etc.) or that flower all summer-long (*Buddleia davidii*)
vase-shaped shrubs (*Hamamelis x intermedia*, *Viburnum plicatum* var. *tomentosum*)

Cultivars – Variants – Related species

-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Aphrodite' - pink-mauve single flowers having a dark magenta eye
-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Ardens' - mauve-purple double-flowering form
-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Blue Bird' - blue-lavender single flowers having a dark magenta eye
-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Diana' - profuse blooming triploid, having pure white single flowers that remain open at night, and set few, if any fruit
-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Minerva' - triploid, with lavender-mauve single flowers, each having a red eye
-*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Red Heart' - white single flowers, each having a scarlet eye