



Wedelia

Wedelia trilobata (L.) Hitchc.

Characteristics

Wedelia is a vigorous, creeping, herbaceous groundcover native to tropical America. It grows to 18–24 inches high but its height can be reduced and maintained at lower levels by periodic trimming or mowing with a rotary mower. It will flower at any height but appears to have the most blossoms when maintained at about 4 inches. Some chemical growth regulators have shown promise in controlling the height of wedelia.

Wedelia forms a dense mat and its stems root into the ground as the plant spreads horizontally. The leaves are bright green, 1–3 inches long, oval or three-lobed, toothed, and hairy. The yellow, daisy-like flowers are borne above the leaves.

Location

Wedelia will thrive in sun or shade, but full sun produces the best flowering. It does well in any soil when provided with ample moisture and fertilizer. Wedelia does well over a range of soil pH, but pH 5.5–7.5 is preferred. This groundcover may be used near the seashore with little injury and will tolerate some traffic.

Landscape uses

Wedelia is one of the most common and dependable groundcovers in Hawaii. It is excellent for erosion control on slopes and banks because it roots where the stem comes in contact with the soil. It may be used under trees, around rocks and ponds, and as a covering in parkways. It grows well when allowed to trail over planter walls or is used as a basket plant. The plant has medium tolerance of drought.

Wedelia is *very* aggressive. It can and will overgrow planting areas, low-growing shrubs, other groundcovers, and small items in the bed. It can also be invasive in lawns, landscape beds, and woodlands. It is not a plant for small or confined areas. Growth can be controlled by carefully managing nitrogen fertilizer and irrigation. Water and fertilize only enough to provide adequate growth and color.



Propagation

Cuttings root readily in five to seven days under moist conditions. Wedelia can be easily established by sprigging by hand or with a hydraulic seeder planting rooted or unrooted cuttings, or from nursery-grown plants. Rooted cuttings or plants in containers should be established on 24–30-inch centers. Unrooted tip cuttings should be set 4–8 inches apart and kept moist until established. Time to coverage is longer with unrooted cuttings.

Problems

Wedelia is attacked by several chewing insects, mites, and leafhoppers. These insects are seldom fatal to wedelia, and chemical pest controls are only recommended for severe infestations. Leaf spot and root rot diseases can be a problem in moist situations. Controls are not recommended unless the damage from diseases is severe. Root rot diseases are difficult to control.

The primary problem associated with wedelia comes from its rampant growth. Problems arise from its use in the wrong situations and from the high level of maintenance required to keep it within bounds. Do not use wedelia in small or confined landscaping situations or where the maintenance budget is not adequate to support regular pruning and trimming. Fertilize and water only enough to maintain healthy plant color.

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