

Senecio cineraria Dusty Miller¹

Edward F. Gilman and Teresa Howe²

Introduction

Dusty miller is grown for its spectacular foliage: silvery-white, delicately divided leaves covered with a very soft, dense fuzz. Reaching 12 to 18 inches in height, dusty miller is ideal for neat edgings or for breaking up large masses of flower color. It can be planted in containers where the foliage can be viewed up close. Dusty miller is especially dramatic when viewed at night, the silvery leaves catching and reflecting the faintest moonlight. While the small blooms are somewhat attractive, they are usually removed to encourage leaf growth.

General Information

Scientific name: *Senecio cineraria*

Pronunciation: sen-NEESH-shee-oh sin-ner-RAIR-ee-uh

Common name(s): dusty miller

Family: *Compositae*

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: Jun

Planting month for zone 8: May

Planting month for zone 9: Mar; Apr; May

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: Feb; Mar; Oct; Nov; Dec

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; border

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

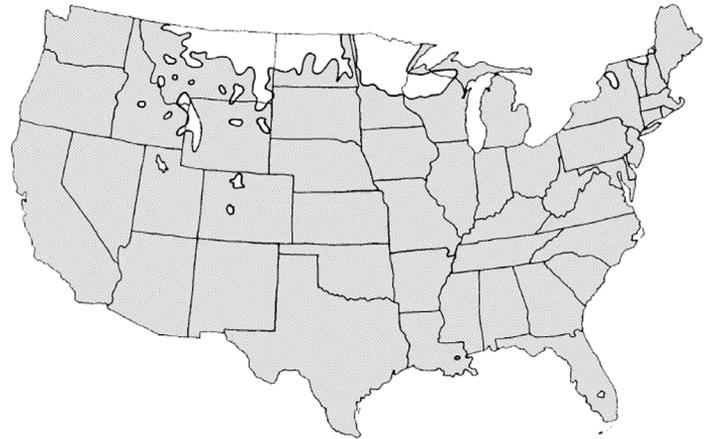


Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet

Spread: .5 to 1 feet

Plant habit: round; upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed

Leaf shape: oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: not applicable

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

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Leaf color: silver/gray

Fall color: not applicable

Fall characteristic: not applicable

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit

Fruit length: no fruit

Fruit cover: no fruit

Fruit color: not applicable

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: not applicable

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Dusty miller should be grown in full sun or very light shade in well-drained soil and occasionally trimmed if plants become leggy. Plants are fairly drought tolerant and should not be over-watered.

The cultivar 'Silver Queen' has silver-white, lacy leaves on compact, eight-inch-tall plants.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern, as long as plants do not remain too wet.