

Senecio cineraria Dusty Miller¹

Edward F. Gilman, Teresa Howe, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen²

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.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Senecio cineraria*: Dusty Miller
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Senecio cineraria*

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

Common name(s): dusty miller

Family: *Asteraceae*

Plant type: annual

USDA hardiness zones: all zones (Figure 2)

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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

1. This document is FPS544, one of a series of the Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised October 2023. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus, Department of Environmental Horticulture; Teresa Howe, former coordinator, research programs and services, UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture, and Gail Hansen, professor, sustainable landscape design, Department of Environmental Horticulture; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 0.5 to 1 feet

Spread: 0.5 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

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

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.