

## Artemisia - Growing Guide

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Mugwort, Sagebrush

Artemisia are common UK garden plants and entirely hardy. They are grown for their impressive foliage effect which comes from their aromatic grey or silver leaves. Most of the varieties which we offer are evergreen but *A. ludoviciana* 'Silver Queen' is not. The flower heads of Artemisia are generally of little real interest but the plants do have many uses in the rockery or herbaceous border.

Apart from the dwarf growing varieties both perennial and, also, evergreen species are best cut back hard to the base of the plant in the spring to maintain their compact habit and to generally tidy them up and prevent them getting 'leggy'.

*A. ludoviciana* 'Silver Queen' is a rhizomatous perennial from N. America growing up to 3 or 4ft eventually from a 2ft wide clump. It has lance shaped leaves which are covered with a silvery-white down. This makes an excellent contrast with other nearby herbaceous plants which grow to a similar or taller height and have green leaves or colourful flowers. The flower heads in late summer are brownish-yellow.

*A. 'Powis Castle'* only grows to around 2ft although mature clumps can become wider than this. It is a semi-woody perennial with billowing clumps of feathery silver-grey leaves. Again the flower heads are yellowish in late summer. This variety can be killed in a severe winter especially if it becomes a bit leggy. It is advisable to take new growth cuttings as a reserve.

*A. schmidtiana* 'Nana' is a genuine evergreen, rhizomatous rockery plant which also creeps along to become clump forming. It grows to only about 3in with a spread of about a foot. The tiny silvery white leaves do stand out well with other rockery plants. The flowers are yellow in summer.

*A. stelleriana* 'Boughton Star', Silver brocade, is also a popular plant for those who like silvery white features in their gardens. This variety is compact and near prostrate. It grows to around 6in with a spread of double this. It is much used in summer parkland and roadside plantings and in window boxes where its stalkless and toothed silver leaves can be shown off to best effect. Insignificant yellow flower heads again late in the season.

All these forms of *Artemesia* are most easily propagated by lifting and dividing mature clumps in autumn or spring.

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