

Japanese Bush Clover

Located in the Secret Garden

By Jennifer Podowski

Walk under the trellis and into the secret garden, and a large shrub will impress you with its cascading branches filled with rosy purple flowers. This is Japanese Bush Clover (*Lespedeza thunbergii* ‘Gibraltar’), a multi-branched, sub-shrub that grows up to 4 to 6 feet tall and 4 to 10 feet wide in an arching clump. Bush Clover produces blue-green, trifoliate, deciduous leaves and a bounty of pea-like flowers, which appear in late August and September.

The best flower production occurs when planted in full sun with average to medium moisture and well-drained soils. Once established, however, it is drought tolerant. Suited to zones 5 – 9, Bush Clover is virtually pest and disease free and deer resistant.

This is a wonderful fall-blooming specimen for your garden. Use it as a background plant, shrub border or cascading over walls. Bush Clover will die back after a hard frost, so cut it to the ground in late winter. Then watch it take off the following growing season.



Flowers still covering most of the shrub on October 12, 2021 in Teaching Garden’s Secret Garden.