



# BUCHANAN'S

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# NATIVE PLANTS



## Santa-rita Tubac™ Prickly Pear Cactus

*Opuntia violacea* var. *santa-rita*

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 7b

Other Names: Santa Rita Prickly Pear, Santarita Prickly Pear

### Description:

An upright spreading succulent with large, showy yellow flowers that bloom in spring; soft blue-gray pads turn purple in winter; year-round beauty in rock gardens and planters; needs perfect drainage and sandy or gravelly soils

### Ornamental Features

Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus has yellow flowers at the ends of the stems from late spring to early summer, which are interesting on close inspection. Its attractive succulent round leaves are powder blue in color. The foliage often turns purple in fall. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from mid to late summer.

### Landscape Attributes

Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus is an herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should never be pruned except to remove any dieback, as it tends not to take pruning well. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Container Planting



*Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



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## **Planting & Growing**

Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Santa-rita Tubac Prickly Pear Cactus is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.