



BUCHANAN'S

NATIVE PLANTS



Firespike

Odontonema strictum

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ●

Hardiness Zone: 10a

Other Names: Cardinal Guard, Scarlet Flame, Mexican Fire Spike

Description:

This dense, upright plant produces clusters of bright red tubular flowers in summer to fall; a shrubby evergreen in frost free areas, in light frost areas it recovers quickly and blooms in fall; an excellent choice for containers or as a landscape accent

Ornamental Features

Firespike features showy clusters of red tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from early summer to late fall. It has attractive dark green foliage which emerges light green in spring. The large textured pointy leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The fruit is not ornamentally significant. The deep purple branches are extremely showy and add significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Firespike is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;



Firespike flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Firespike in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



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- Self-Seeding

Firespike is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Firespike will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Firespike makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.