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Crown Of Thorns

Euphorbia milii

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Other Names: Christ Plant, Christ Thorn

Description:

A visually striking shrub; upright stems are woody and very thorny, crowned with bright green oval leaves; blooms seasonally with showy, petal like bracts; it really lights up the garden or borders; also great for rock gardens

Ornamental Features

Crown Of Thorns features showy clusters of green flowers with red bracts held atop the branches from early spring to late fall. It has attractive green evergreen foliage which emerges light green in spring. The oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Crown Of Thorns is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.



Crown Of Thorns flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Crown Of Thorns in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Crown Of Thorns is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Crown Of Thorns in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Crown Of Thorns will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub 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 xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Crown Of Thorns makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. 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.