Grow a Greener Garden

Garden and Landscape Plant Finder

Fishbone Cactus*

Selenicereus anthonyanus



Fishbone Cactus foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 10a

Other Names: Zig Zag Cactus, Rick Rack Cactus, Cryptocereus

Description:

An unusual epiphytic cactus that is adapted to moist, tropical environments; a climbing variety with stems that have flattened areas resembling leaves; evening blooming flowers are spectacular, but difficult to get to bloom

Ornamental Features

Fishbone Cactus is an atypical member of the cactus family known as an 'epiphyte' or 'air plant', which means that it doesn't necessarily require a growing medium for its roots. Like all other cacti, it doesn't actually have leaves, but rather modified succulent stems that comprise the bulk of the plant. This particular variety of cactus is valued for its spreading habit of growth on a plant consisting of This plant features showy fragrant fuchsia star-shaped flowers with white overtones and gold eyes along the stems from late spring to early summer.

Landscape Attributes

Fishbone Cactus is a succulent evergreen plant with a spreading habit of growth that trails along the ground. As a type of cactus, it has no true foliage; the body of the plant is wholly comprised of a linked series of smooth green flattened stem segments which are connected together to form the branches of the plant.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. Stray segments or shoots can be removed or thinned to control the overall form and spread of the plant. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Fishbone Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Fishbone Cactus will grow to be about 4 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. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This plant does best in partial shade to shade. Unlike most cacti, which are known for their strong preference for hot, dry growing environments, this plant is native to tropical climates and grows in areas with more humidity and rainfall than most cacti. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Fishbone Cactus is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden. Be aware that in our climate, this plant may be too tender to survive the winter if left outdoors in a container. Contact our experts for more information on how to protect it over the winter months.

** This is a 'special order' plant - contact store for details*