Red Crown Cactus

Rebutia minuscula



Red Crown Cactus flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 inches

Spread: 6 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Fire Crown Cactus, Violet Crown Cactus

Description:

This mounding cactus produces striking red to orange blooms in abundance during spring and summer; does not tolerate freezing temperatures; water only occasionally; a stunning rock garden or container plant

Ornamental Features

Red Crown Cactus is a member of the cactus family, which are grown primarily for their characteristic shapes, their interesting features and textures, and their high tolerance for hot, dry growing environments. Like all cacti, it doesn't actually have leaves, but rather modified succulent stems that comprise the bulk of the plant, and which are designed to hold water for long periods of time. This particular cactus is valued for its highly curious, almost geodesic form, and usually grows as a single spiny polygonal grayish green stem. This plant is clothed in stunning red cup-shaped flowers with white eyes along the stems in mid spring.

Landscape Attributes

Red Crown Cactus is a tiny succulent evergreen plant with a very distinctive polygonal shape. It tends to grow as a solitary entity comprised of a single stem, and it doesn't usually spread laterally. As a type of cactus, it has no true foliage; the body of the plant is wholly comprised of a spiny grayish green stem which is distinctly geometric in form.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, 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

Red Crown Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Red Crown Cactus will grow to be only 5 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 inches. It is often grown as either a solitary specimen or in combination with other complementary plants as part of a garden composition. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. 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. Like most succulents and cacti, this plant prefers to grow in poor soils and should therefore never be fertilized. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Red Crown Cactus is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It is often used as a 'filler' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, providing a mass of flowers and foliage against which the thriller plants stand out. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.