Baja Desert-thorn

Lycium brevipes

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Common Desert Thorn, Wolfberry

Description:

An upright, spreading shrub grown primarily for its abundant, showy berries that are attractive to birds; long, flexible canes with clusters of tiny gray-green leaves; lavender white flowers appear in late spring are rather subtle

Ornamental Features

Baja Desert-thorn is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries from late summer to mid fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. It is draped in stunning lavender trumpet-shaped flowers with white overtones along the branches from late spring to early summer. It has grayish green deciduous foliage. The tiny fuzzy oval leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color.

Landscape Attributes

Baja Desert-thorn is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.



Baja Desert-thorn
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Baja Desert-thorn flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds 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

Baja Desert-thorn is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Baja Desert-thorn will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a low canopy, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.

Baja Desert-thorn 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. 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.