Mutable Aloe

Aloe mutabilis



Mutable Aloe
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Changing Aloe

Description:

A horizontally stemmed variety with beautiful rosettes of succulent, toothed, sword shaped leaves; deep red buds open to orange red flowers that change to yellow as they mature; an interesting garden or container plant

Ornamental Features

Mutable Aloe features showy spikes of orange tubular flowers with yellow overtones and green tips rising above the foliage from late fall to late winter, which emerge from distinctive red flower buds. Its attractive succulent sword-like leaves remain bluish-green in color with prominent red tips throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Mutable Aloe is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its wonderfully bold, coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced garden composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. 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

Mutable Aloe is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Mutable Aloe will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 4 feet. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant 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 a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Mutable Aloe is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.