Fire Spike

Odontonema strictum

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Cardinal Guard, Firespike, Odontonema cuspidatum



Fire Spike flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

This dense, upright plant produces clusters of bright red tubular flowers in summer to fall; a shrubby evergreen in frost free areas, in light frost areas it recovers quickly and blooms in fall; an excellent choice for containers or as a landscape accent

Ornamental Features

Fire Spike features showy clusters of red tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from early summer to late fall. Its attractive large textured pointy leaves emerge light green in spring, turning dark green in color the rest of the year. The deep purple stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.



Fire Spike in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Fire Spike is a dense multi-stemmed 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 is best cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Fire Spike is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Fire Spike will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. Although it is technically a woody plant, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as a perennial in our climate if planted outdoors over the winter, usually regrowing from its base (crown) the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

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