Ming Asparagus Fern

Asparagus retrofractus



Ming Asparagus Fern foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Asparagus macowanii, Pom Pom Asparagus

Description:

A large shrub-like perennial featuring upright, silver-gray canes that hold feathery tufts of threadlike leaves; small, fragrant white flowers in spring, followed by orange fruits; a great textural accent for the garden or containers; popular for bonsai

Ornamental Features

Ming Asparagus Fern features dainty fragrant white cup-shaped flowers along the stems from mid spring to early summer. Its attractive tiny compound needle-like leaves remain light green in color throughout the year. The fruits are showy orange drupes carried in abundance from mid summer to early fall. The gray stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Ming Asparagus Fern is a dense herbaceous evergreen perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and can be pruned at anytime. 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;

- Spiny

Ming Asparagus Fern is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Ming Asparagus Fern will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant performs well in both full sun and full 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 a low-water garden or xeriscape application. 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..

Ming Asparagus Fern 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.