Desert Senna

Senna nemophila



Desert Senna in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 7 feet

Spread: 7 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Desert Cassia, Cassia nemophila, Threadleaf Senna

Description:

This rounded evergreen shrub features very narrow, bright green foliage, and masses of yellow, pea-like flowers in late winter to early spring; drought tolerant once established; great for borders or containers



Desert Senna flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Desert Senna features showy racemes of yellow pea-like flowers at the ends of the branches from late winter to early spring. It has attractive light green foliage with hints of bluish-green. The small threadlike compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain light green throughout the winter. The fruits are showy green pods which fade to brick red over time, which are displayed from late spring to mid fall.

Landscape Attributes

Desert Senna is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a more or less rounded form. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Desert Senna is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Desert Senna will grow to be about 7 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 7 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. 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 pH, but grows best in poor soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Desert Senna makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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 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.