Giant Dioon

Dioon spinulosum

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Gum Palm, Giant Mexican Cycad

Description:

A large, fast growing cycad, featuring a palm-like crown of spiny, feather-like leaves; will develop a stocky trunk over time; an attractive accent plant that prefers moist, well drained, fertile soil; cold tolerant with some shelter

Ornamental Features

Giant Dioon's attractive large spiny narrow pinnately compound leaves emerge light green in spring, turning bluish-green in color with hints of steel blue the rest of the year on a plant with an arching habit of growth. The creamy white fruits which fade to tan over time are held in cones from late fall to late winter. The dark brown stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Giant Dioon is a spreading evergreen perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should never be pruned except to remove any dieback, as it tends not to take pruning well. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Giant Dioon is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Giant Dioon
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Giant Dioon
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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



Giant Dioon foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Giant Dioon will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 300 years or more; think of this as a heritage perennial for future generations! As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round. This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. 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 quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets..

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