California Barberry

Berberis pinnata



California Barberry
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 7 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Coast Barberry, Wavyleaf Barberry, Island Barberry

Description:

A vigorous, medium-sized shrub with holly-like, glossy green leaves that emerge tinged with copper; an abundance of yellow flowers in spring are followed by blue-black berries that are attractive to birds; a great hedge, screen, or landscape accent

Ornamental Features

California Barberry features showy clusters of yellow flowers at the ends of the branches from late winter to early spring. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage which emerges coppery-bronze in spring. The large spiny oval compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. It produces navy blue berries with powder blue hints from late summer to mid fall, which fade to black over time.

Landscape Attributes

California Barberry is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and can be pruned at anytime. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering
- Spiny

California Barberry is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

California Barberry will grow to be about 7 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 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 slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub performs well in both full sun and full 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. This plant will benefit from an application of bonemeal and/or mycorrhizal fertilizer at the time of planting. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.