Mickey Mouse Plant

Ochna serrulata

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Carnival Bush

Description:

A small, slow growing, semi-evergreen shrub with a loose, open habit; yellow flowers from spring to summer quickly give way to a display of bright red calyces and pairs of black fruit that resemble Mickey Mouse ears; an interesting accent plant

Ornamental Features

Mickey Mouse Plant features showy panicles of fragrant yellow flowers with cherry red calyces hanging below the branches from late spring to mid summer. The fruits are showy green drupes which fade to black over time, which are carried in abundance in late summer. It has forest green deciduous foliage. The glossy narrow leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color.

Landscape Attributes

Mickey Mouse Plant is an open multi-stemmed deciduous 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.



Mickey Mouse Plant flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Mickey Mouse Plant in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, 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, 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;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

Mickey Mouse Plant is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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



Mickey Mouse Plant flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Mickey Mouse Plant will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 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 approximately 18 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America..

Mickey Mouse Plant makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 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.