Mexican Barberry

Berberis haematocarpa



Mexican Barberry foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Red Barberry

Description:

A vigorous, upright, evergreen shrub with holly-like, spiny green leaves that age to blue-green; whorled yellow flowers in spring are followed by orange-red berries that are attractive to birds; a great hedge, screen, or accent plant

Ornamental Features

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

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Barberry is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

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

Mexican Barberry is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Mexican Barberry will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 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 medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial 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 xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for alkaline soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.