PLANT FINDER

Crown Of Thorns

Euphorbia milii

Crown Of Thorns flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Christ Plant, Christ Thorn

Description:

A visually striking shrub; upright stems are woody and very thorny, crowned with bright green oval leaves; blooms seasonally with showy, petal like bracts; it really lights up the garden or borders; also great for rock gardens

Ornamental Features

Crown Of Thorns features showy clusters of green flowers with red bracts held atop the branches from early spring to late fall. Its attractive oval leaves emerge light green in spring, turning green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Crown Of Thorns is a multi-stemmed annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting 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;

- Spiny

Crown Of Thorns is recommended for the following landscape applications;

Crown Of Thorns in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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

Planting & Growing

Crown Of Thorns will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. Although it's not a true annual, this slow-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. 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. It can be propagated by cuttings.

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