



Prickly Pear Cactus

Opuntia polyacantha

Height: 6 inches

Spread: 12 inches

Sunlight: ☉

Hardiness Zone: 2a

Ornamental Features

Prickly Pear Cactus has lemon yellow flowers at the ends of the stems in mid summer, which are interesting on close inspection. Its succulent round leaves remain green in colour throughout the season. The fruit is not ornamentally significant.

Landscape Attributes

Prickly Pear Cactus is an herbaceous perennial with a ground-hugging habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should never be pruned except to remove any dieback, as it tends not to take pruning well. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Prickly Pear Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Rock/Alpine Gardens

Planting & Growing

Prickly Pear Cactus will grow to be only 6 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 inches. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It requires an extremely dry, well-drained growing location, and will usually 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 quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.



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Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder