



Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus

Opuntia compressa

Height: 12 inches

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Humifusa Prickly Pear Cactus

Description:

A low growing spreading succulent cactus with showy butter yellow flowers that bloom in spring; exceptional as an accent for rock gardens and planters; needs perfect drainage and sandy or gravelly soils

Ornamental Features

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

Landscape Attributes

Eastern 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

Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Rock/Alpine Gardens

Planting & Growing

Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus will grow to be about 12 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years.



Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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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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