Butterfly Agave

Agave potatorum 'Verschaffeltii'



Butterfly Agave
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 15 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 7a

Other Names: syn. A. scolymus, A. potatorum, Century Plant

Description:

This variety makes a grea garden accent with its dramatic gray-green foliage that is reflexed back, with chestnut brown spines; may take many years to bloom, then plant dies, rarely leaving offsets; it is very spiny so handle with great care

Ornamental Features

Butterfly Agave features bold spikes of light green pincushion flowers with red overtones and red bracts rising above the foliage in late summer. It has grayish green evergreen foliage. The succulent sword-like leaves remain grayish green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Butterfly Agave is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. 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;

- Suckering
- Spiny

Butterfly Agave is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Butterfly Agave will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 15 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years.

This shrub 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 poor soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by multiplication of the underground bulbs; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Butterfly Agave makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base 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.