Baja Spurge

Euphorbia xanti

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9a

Other Names: Cherry Blossom Euphorbia, Aklema xanti



Baja Spurge flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

A fast growing, openly branched shrub with thin gray-green stems bearing small leaves that appear just after the flowers, then often drop off in the high temperatures of summer; fragrant, pink flushed white flower clusters appear mid-winter



Baja Spurge flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Baja Spurge is a highly distinctive and unusual plant. Although it actually isn't technically a cactus, it is still a succulent evergreen which behaves much like a cactus. It is characterized by the highly modified and distinctive smooth cylindrical grayish green stems that comprise the bulk of the plant, and which are designed to retain water for extended periods of time. It has green evergreen foliage. The small succulent pointy leaves remain green throughout the winter. This plant features showy clusters of fragrant white star-shaped flowers with pink overtones and brick red eyes at the ends of the branches from mid winter to late spring before the leaves.

Landscape Attributes

Baja Spurge is an unusual succulent evergreen plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. It commonly grows as a shrub-like plant with multiple 'branches' and stems. Unlike a cactus, which this plant resembles, it does have foliage, but it's the smooth grayish green narrow cylindrical segments that are of primary interest from a landscape or garden perspective.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. 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
- Self-Seeding

Baja Spurge is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Baja Spurge will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 10 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 fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years. As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. 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 xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. 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.

Baja Spurge makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 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.