Boojum Tree

Fouquieria columnaris

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 9a

Other Names: Cirio



Boojum Tree
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

Often considered to be the strangest tree on Earth, this very slow growing columnar succulent rises as a single, thorny stem bearing small leafy branchlets all the way up; creamy yellow flowers in mid to late summer; may eventually branch after many years

Ornamental Features

Boojum Tree features airy clusters of buttery yellow tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from early to mid summer, which emerge from distinctive creamy white flower buds. It has bluish-green deciduous foliage which emerges chartreuse in spring. The spiny oval leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. It produces brown capsules from late summer to mid fall. The smooth white bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.



Boojum Tree
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Boojum Tree is a deciduous plant with a strong central leader and a narrowly upright and columnar growth habit. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs 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. 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

Boojum Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Vertical Accent
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Boojum Tree will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 300 years or more; think of this as a heritage plant for future generations!

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 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America..



Boojum Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Boojum Tree is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting 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.