Rat Tail Cactus

Aporocactus flagelliformis



Rat Tail Cactus in full
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 9b

Other Names: Rattail Cactus, Disocactus flagelliformis

Description:

An interesting native to Central America, this variety of cactus produces long trailing stems reaching 4 ft. long; bright violet-red flowers appear in the spring to early summer months; a fantastic specimen for indoor containers and hanging baskets

Features & Attributes

Rat Tail Cactus is a tiny succulent evergreen plant. It is an atypical member of the cactus family known as an 'epiphyte' or 'air plant', which means that it doesn't necessarily require a growing medium for its roots. Like all other cacti, it doesn't actually have leaves, but rather modified succulent stems that comprise the bulk of the plant. This particular variety of cactus is valued for its characteristically trailing and weeping form on a plant consisting of long and narrow, thread-like green stems that form 'branches' which spread out from a central base.

Planting & Growing

When grown indoors, Rat Tail Cactus can be expected to grow to be only 6 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. This houseplant requires direct sun for optimal performance, and should therefore be situated in a room that gets bright sunlight for a good part of the day; it is not a good choice for rooms lit only by artificial light. This is a unique plant in that it requires extremely dry, well-drained soil, and it will die if left in standing water for any length of time - in fact it will suffer if it is over-watered. The soil should be allowed to go completely dry to the touch an inch or two deep for prolonged periods, and it may only need watering once every few weeks. Be aware that your particular watering schedule may vary depending on its location in the room, the pot size, plant size and other conditions; if in doubt, ask one of our experts in the store for advice. Like most succulents and cacti, it prefers to grow in poor soils and should therefore never be fertilized. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soil. Contact the store for specific recommendations on pre-mixed potting soil for this plant.

There are many factors that will affect the ultimate height, spread and overall performance of a plant when grown indoors; among them, the size of the pot it's growing in, the amount of light it receives, watering frequency, the pruning regimen and repotting schedule. Use the information described here as a guideline only; individual performance can and will vary. Please contact the store to speak with one of our experts if you are interested in further details concerning recommendations on pot size, watering, pruning, repotting, etc.