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Mexican Cliffrose in the Landscape

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Purshia mexicana

Mexican cliffrose



Description: Mexican cliffrose is the southern cousin of *Purshia tridentata* (antelope bitterbrush) but is taller with pleasantly fragrant evergreen foliage and a gnarled form that can grow to six feet tall. The creamy white to pale yellow honey-scented flowers that cover the plant in late spring give way to long feathery seedheads in early to mid summer. The small dark green, deeply lobed leaves that cover the branches provide a nice contrast to the five-petaled, yellow-centered flowers. Mexican cliffrose occurs throughout the southern regions of the Intermountain West and has great potential for use in low-water landscapes.

Cultural Requirements:

- Native habitat Open slopes and rocky areas
- Soil Well drained, tolerates low fertility; prefers coarse, gravelly soil
- Cold Tolerance Zones 4 - 7
- Drought Tolerance High; can become unruly when over-watered
- Salt Tolerance Low
- Sun/Shade Preference Full sun
- Transplanting Moderately easy
- Propagation From seed
- Maintenance Prune old and stray branches in late spring after bloom; avoid overhead watering
- Problems Browsed by deer; does not tolerate water on its foliage

Landscape Value:

- Use in the Landscape Background, hedge, naturalized areas
- Foliage Evergreen
- Inflorescence Showy

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
• Color							

- Fruit (seedheads) Feathery appearance when mature
- Form Upright; vase-shaped when young to irregular with age
- Texture Coarse
- Ultimate Size 6 feet in a landscape setting
- Rate of Growth Slow
- Plant Community Parkland, pinyon-juniper, mountain mahogany, shrub steppe, cool desert shrub
- Availability Utah's Choice selection (visit <http://www.utahschoice.org/natives/wheretobuy> for more information)
- Cultivars None of ornamental value

Propagation

To start seed indoors soak seed in hydrogen peroxide for up to 24 hours. Rinse well. Cold, moist stratify for 60 days (not too moist or seed will rot). Sow into container to a depth of ½ inch. To start outdoors, sow seed in the fall and cover with ½ inch soil. Water in, and look for germination in spring.

Additional Photos



Photo credits: Graham Hunter

References

Cerny, T., L. Rupp, C. Reid, and M. Kuhns. 2002. Selection and Culture of Landscape Plants in Utah: A guide for southwestern and central Utah. Utah State University Extension Bulletin HG 500.3 URL: http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_500_3.pdf

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This fact sheet belongs to a series of fact sheets about Intermountain West native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses called "Native Plants in the Landscape." Look for others in the series by visiting <http://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications>, then clicking on 'Horticulture' and 'Native Plants'.

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