



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Wax Spurge or Candelilla

Euphorbia antisiphylitica

DESCRIPTION: Wax spurge is a clumping, wand-like semi-succulent. It forms clusters of thin, upright, pencil-like stems rising up to 3' tall from underground rhizomes. Flowers are small, pinkish in the center and becoming cream farther out. Stems are covered with a high quality wax, when extracted by boiling, that has been used for candles, soap, ointments, floor polish and waterproofing, among other uses. The plants have been greatly overharvested in Mexico for this wax. The common name means "little candle", referring to the appearance of the stems; the scientific name comes from the folk lore that the plant is effective for treatment of venereal disease. Sap may in fact be irritating to skin. It can be found growing naturally on gravelly limestone hills primarily in the Chihuahuan Desert in Big Bend with a few populations in the Rio Grande Plains, and south into Mexico.

RECOMMENDED USE: Potted accent, xeriscape, rock garden.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Frost hardy to around 15° F.



Sun tolerance: Sun or very light shade;



Watering and feeding: It is very drought tolerant once established. Containerized plants need irrigation once a week during the hottest months. Discontinue watering during winter dormancy. For containers, feed two or three times during the year. None necessary for landscape plantings.



Soil requirements: A well-drained potting mix for containers.



Pruning: Only to remove dead branches or to control size.

NOTE: As with many plants in the spurge family, Waxy Spurge has milky sap that may be poisonous and can stain clothing.



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Hardiness: Frost hardy to around 20° F.



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