Firecracker Plant

Cuphea ignea



Firecracker Plant flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Mexican Cigar Plant, Cigar Flower

Description:

Small, freely branching shrub or subshrub with unusual orange-red tubular flowers with pink eyes; flowers year round in warmer climates; a great garden accent or container plant

Ornamental Features

Firecracker Plant has orange tubular flowers with red overtones and hot pink throats along the branches from early spring to late winter, which are interesting on close inspection. Its pointy leaves remain bluish-green in color throughout the year.



Firecracker Plant in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Firecracker Plant is an open multi-stemmed annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Firecracker Plant is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Firecracker Plant will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Firecracker Plant is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.