East Bay Nursery

Evergreen Currant

Ribes viburnifolium



Evergreen Currant foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Other Names: Island Gooseberry, Catalina Currant

Description:

A rare evergreen variety native to southern California; great for drought-tolerant landscaping; low to the ground with a spreading, weeping habit; clusters of deep red flowers in late winter, followed by small red fruits

Ornamental Features

Evergreen Currant has attractive dark green foliage with light green undersides on a plant with a spreading habit of growth. The glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. It is bathed in stunning clusters of lightly-scented dark red star-shaped flowers with white anthers along the branches from late winter to early spring. It produces red berries in mid spring. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The brick red stems can be quite attractive.

This plant is primarily grown as an ornamental, but it's also valued for its edible qualities. The small round tart berries are most often used in the following ways:

- Baking
- Preserves

Landscape Attributes

Evergreen Currant is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a ground-hugging habit of growth. 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 shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and can be pruned at anytime. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Suckering
- Self-Seeding

Evergreen Currant is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Evergreen Currant will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.

Evergreen Currant makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. 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.