



Butcher's Broom
Ruscus aculeatus

Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

An intriguing slow-growing evergreen with sturdy dark green stems foliated with small, tough leaf-like structures that are actually a form of stem with a spine on the end; tiny greenish-white flowers are inconspicuous

Ornamental Features

Butcher's Broom is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. It features an abundance of magnificent red berries in early fall. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The spiny pointy leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. It features subtle green star-shaped flowers with white overtones along the branches in mid spring.

Landscape Attributes

Butcher's Broom is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading 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 is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny
- Self-Seeding

Butcher's Broom is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Butcher's Broom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Butcher's Broom foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Butcher's Broom will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.

Butcher's Broom makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use 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 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.