



ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Santa Rita Prickly Pear or Nopal Morado *Opuntia santa-rita*

DESCRIPTION: This beautiful prickly pear has become a standard in desert landscaping because of its unusual purple color. This color is quite genetically variable. It grows at a moderate rate to as much as 6' by 6'. It often stays smaller and is easy to keep at a particular size. Long spines are few or absent, but tiny golden glochids fill each areole. Flowers are bright yellow and appear in April or May. The Santa Rita Prickly Pear is native to the grasslands and transition areas of southern Arizona and adjacent Sonora, Mexico. Tubac™ is a colorful clone. The rich purple pads provide plenty of winter interest. During the warmer months the pads are a soft blue-grey color.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use Santa Rita Prickly Pear as an accent, rock garden, or in an enhanced desert landscape.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: It is hardy to at least 15°F.



Sun tolerance: It gets its best growth and dark purple color when grown in full sun.



Watering and feeding: Water once every week or two the first growing season (spring-early fall). Once established it can get by on rainfall.



Soil requirements: It does best in well-drained soil, but can grow on most soil types.



Pruning: To limit size, knock off new pads as they emerge in the spring.