



## Pencil Cactus

*Euphorbia tirucalli* 'Sticks On Fire'

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ☉ ●

Hardiness Zone: 10a

Other Names: Fire Stick, Milk Bush, Finger Tree

### Description:

An upright, nearly leafless succulent with brick red old growth; dazzling red-orange stems; flowers are insignificant; an interesting textural plant for dry sunny areas

### Ornamental Features

Pencil Cactus has attractive red evergreen foliage on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. The succulent narrow leaves are highly ornamental and remain red throughout the winter. The red branches are extremely showy and add significant winter interest.

### Landscape Attributes

Pencil Cactus is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and can be pruned at anytime. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Pencil Cactus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



*Pencil Cactus foliage*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



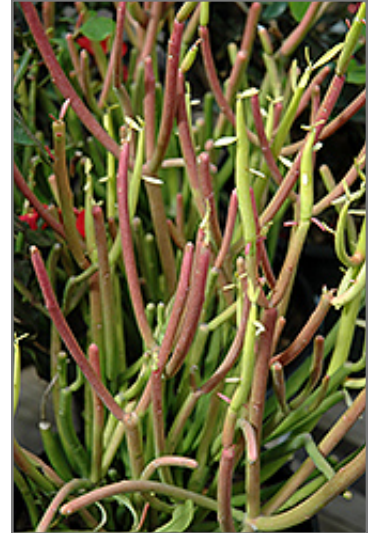
*Pencil Cactus*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

### Planting & Growing

Pencil Cactus will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 60 years or more.

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 considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Pencil Cactus 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.



*Pencil Cactus foliage*  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder