



ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

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PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Southwest Coral Bean or Chilicote

Erythrina flabelliformis

DESCRIPTION: In its tropical habitats this species is a tree to 25 feet tall. At the northern limit of its range in southern Arizona frost prunes it to a multi-stemmed shrub rarely over 6 feet tall. In mid to late spring the leafless stems produce clusters of brilliant crimson, tubular flowers that are highly attractive to hummingbirds. The light green trifoliate leaves are produced only for a few months in summer. The coral bean gets its' name from the bright red poisonous seeds displayed when the large seed pods split open and remain hanging on the stems.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use as an accent plant for its flashy spring flowers and bright green summer foliage. The leafless stems are also interesting. Best against a sunny wall to protect it from freezes. Flowers are produced only on year-old wood, so they won't flower the first spring after a killing freeze.

(over)



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CULTURE:



Hardiness: Stems are killed by temperatures in the middle 20's if exposed. They will survive harder freezes if planted under an overhang, against a wall, among boulders, or are covered. Resprouts vigorously from the tuberous roots, but will not flower the next spring.



Sun tolerance: Full sun to light shade.



Watering and feeding: Begin watering as the leaves form in late spring, then continue until they turn yellow in fall.



Soil requirements: A well-drained soil is conducive to maximum vitality.



Pruning: Prune only to create and maintain an unusual shape, during the start of the growing season. Remove frost-killed stems in the spring.

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