



ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Dahlia-rooted Cactus or Sacamatraca *Peniocereus striatus*

DESCRIPTION: The Dahlia-rooted Cactus seems to be a rare cactus of our region. However, it is probably more common than is thought because it is quite cryptic in appearance. It is a twiggly, barely succulent plant, generally looking like a bunch of dry sticks. Only close observation allows one to see the areoles and spines that show that it is a cactus. From its tuber-like roots it can grow up 4 feet tall, although only with support. It blooms in the summer, with delicate, white, night-blooming flowers. The fragrant flowers are pollinated by sphingid moths, leading to production of bright red fruit. Dahlia-rooted Cactus is native to southwestern Arizona, and into the hot deserts and thornscrub of Baja California and Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico where it is often found growing under ironwood trees and creosote bushes.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use as a patio container specimen or as a well-placed landscape oddity.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Will take a few degrees of frost. Protect from temperatures below 28°F.



Sun tolerance: It can take full sun if watched carefully for dessication. Light shade is much better.



Watering and feeding: In containers, it needs regular water (weekly during warm weather) and twice yearly fertilization. In the ground it also needs regular watering to establish, and would benefit by supplemental water during drought after establishment.



Soil requirements: Needs good drainage. Silty-sand is best.



Pruning: Stems occasionally die and need to be removed.