

# Mexican Cliffrose in the Landscape

*Heidi Kratsch*, Extension Ornamental Horticulture Specialist  
*Graham Hunter*, Research Associate, Center for Water Efficient Landscaping

## *Purshia mexicana*

### Mexican cliffrose



**Description:** Mexican cliffrose is the southern cousin of *Purshia tridentata* (antelope bitterbrush) but is taller with pleasantly fragrant evergreen foliage and a gnarled form that can grow to six feet tall. The creamy white to pale yellow honey-scented flowers that cover the plant in late spring give way to long feathery seedheads in early to mid summer. The small dark green, deeply lobed leaves that cover the branches provide a nice contrast to the five-petaled, yellow-centered flowers. Mexican cliffrose occurs throughout the southern regions of the Intermountain West and has great potential for use in low-water landscapes.

### Cultural Requirements:

- Native habitat
  - Soil
  - Cold Tolerance
  - Drought Tolerance
  - Salt Tolerance
  - Sun/Shade Preference
  - Transplanting
  - Propagation
  - Maintenance
  - Problems
- Open slopes and rocky areas  
 Well drained, tolerates low fertility;  
 prefers coarse, gravelly soil  
 Zones 4 - 7  
 High; can become unruly when over-  
 watered  
 Low  
 Full sun  
 Moderately easy  
 From seed  
 Prune old and stray branches in late  
 spring after bloom; avoid overhead  
 watering  
 Browsed by deer; does not tolerate  
 water on its foliage

**Landscape Value:**

- Use in the Landscape Background, hedge, naturalized areas
- Foliage Evergreen
- Inflorescence Showy

					Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct				
• Color															

- Fruit (seedheads) Feathery appearance when mature
- Form Upright; vase-shaped when young to irregular with age
- Texture Coarse
- Ultimate Size 6 feet in a landscape setting
- Rate of Growth Slow
- Plant Community Parkland, pinyon-juniper, mountain mahogany, shrub steppe, cool desert shrub
- Availability Utah's Choice selection (visit <http://www.utahschoice.org/natives/wheretobuy> for more information)
- Cultivars None of ornamental value

**Propagation**

To start seed indoors soak seed in hydrogen peroxide for up to 24 hours. Rinse well. Cold, moist stratify for 60 days (not too moist or seed will rot). Sow into container to a depth of 1/2 inch. To start outdoors, sow seed in the fall and cover with 1/2 inch soil. Water in, and look for germination in spring.

**Additional Photos**



Photo credits: Graham Hunter

**References**

Cerny, T., L. Rupp, C. Reid, and M. Kuhns. 2002. Selection and Culture of Landscape Plants in Utah: A guide for southwestern and central Utah. Utah State University Extension Bulletin HG 500.3 URL: [http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG\\_500\\_3.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_500_3.pdf)

Mee, W., J. Barnes, R. Kjergren, R. Sutton, T. Cerny, and C. Johnson. 2003.  
Waterwise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT.

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2008. Plants database. URL: <http://plants.usda.gov>

This fact sheet belongs to a series of fact sheets about Intermountain West native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses called "Native Plants in the Landscape." Look for others in the series by visiting <http://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications>, then clicking on 'Horticulture' and 'Native Plants'.

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.