

Firespike

Odontonema strictum

Plant Description:

Firespike is an herbaceous perennial with large showy spikes of bright red tubular flowers. These flowers attract many species of butterflies as well as hummingbirds. Firespike is one of very few red flowering plants that perform well in partial shade. It is also recommended for landscapes infested with root-knot nematode, as it is more tolerate to damage than other ornamental plants.

Mature Size: 3 – 5 feet tall, 2 -3 feet wide

Growth Rate: Moderate

Plant Habit: Upright, clumping

Plant Spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Ornamental Characteristics & Uses:

Foliage Color: Dark green

Flower Color: Red

Bloom Time: Fall – Winter (or until frost)

Attracts Wildlife: Butterflies, Hummingbirds, Other Insect Pollinators

Uses: Mass plantings in perennial borders and butterfly gardens



Growing Requirements:

Cold Hardiness Zone(s): 8 – 11

Exposure: Full Sun – Partial Shade

Water Needs: Moderate

Soil Tolerances: Tolerates most soils; fair drought tolerance

Soil pH: Acidic to Slightly Alkaline

Maintenance: Easy



General Care & Growing Tips:

Plants die back during freezing weather and should be cut to the ground after danger of frost in the spring. This stimulates fresh growth from the base of the plant and removes last year's twigs. In frost-free areas, cut stems back to the ground after flowering. A general purpose, slow-release fertilizer application in spring should be sufficient for adequate growth through the season. Like most plants, maintaining a 2- to 3- inch layer of organic mulch is beneficial to retain soil moisture and keep the root ball from drying out.

Common Pests:

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Reference: Gilman, E. and Delvalle, T. (1999). *Odontonema strictum* Firepike. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp445>

Photo Credit: Alicia Lamborn



This fact sheet was written by Dr. Kyle Brown, Baker County Master Gardener, and edited by Alicia Lamborn, Baker County Horticulture Agent.