



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Rock Fig or Tescalama

Ficus petiolaris

DESCRIPTION. Rock figs reflect their tropical origin as stranger figs. Instead of engulfing a host tree, however, this desert species embraces rocky cliff faces and even stone or adobe houses. Native to arid tropical Mexico, they grow to gigantic size in nature but can be dwarfed in cultivation. Young plants have bulbous bases that persist for many years in cultivation. Rock Figs are sensitive to changes and may drop leaves in response to changes in lighting, humidity, and temperatures. They will quickly put on new leaves adapted to the new situation.

RECOMMENDED USE. An excellent bonsai subject, especially when mounted on a rock with its roots engulfing it. It must be grown in a pot for frost protection and to control size.

CULTURE



Hardiness: Frost tender; protect from freezing.



Sun tolerance: Nearly full sun to moderate shade. Exposed stems and roots may sunburn in full afternoon sun.



Watering and feeding: Don't allow potting mix to become completely dry, especially during the warmer months. Fertilize once a month during the growing season as long as you want it to grow. If it has reached its desired size, fertilize only once or twice a year. Water sparingly in winter to maintain leaves (it's not harmful if leaves drop during winter).



Soil requirements: Well-drained potting mix.



Pruning: Only to shape or encourage branching. If it grows tall and spindly, cut the stem to just above the swollen base.

NOTES: A rock fig grows fast until it fills its container, then growth nearly stops. Size is easily limited by container volume (just don't let the roots grow through the pot into the ground).