

July Cactus of the Month

Elizabeth Jackson

Common Name: **Fire Barrel Cactus**

Species: *Ferocactus Gracilis*

Family: Cactaceae

Subfamily: Cactoideae

Genus: *Ferocactus*

I became interested in this cactus when I was at a local nursery just south of Houston trying to decide on the cactus I wanted to present and add to my collection. What caught my attention was the striking red spines.

I ended up getting this cactus from Miles Anderson (miles2go.com). This is a good cactus for beginners so of course that's a good fit for me and it does well in containers.



Origin and Habitat: This barrel cactus is native to Baja California, Mexico which is located in the northwest. Most notable range of mountains found there are the Sierra De Juárez and the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir.

It is a dry climate with hot summers, but with its proximity near the Pacific Ocean the cold air current helps to maintain temperatures and add humidity. This ferocactus can be found along the rocky hillsides, silt flats and gravel plains.

Description: Dark green stem, bright red spines with light-grey felted areoles that are oval and bear clusters of 7 to 13 central spines. The central spines are somewhat hooked and flat, up to 1.6 inches (4cm) long. Radial spines are slender, up to 2.4 inches (6cm) long. The flowers appear in late spring to early summer and will open during the day. Colors range from golden yellow or reddish, with a darker red stripe down the middle of each petal followed by yellow fruit. Younger specimens will start off globular and become more cylindrical with age.

Cultivating/Growth: This is a slow growing species. You will see growth during the summer months and it will begin giving you blooms when it reaches around 20-25cm. It does well in containers with fast draining soil.

Choose a location for your *Ferocactus* that receives direct sun light to develop their typical spines. Keep it watered regularly in the summer but let it dry out between watering. It can take more water if you are seeing good, active growth.

This *Ferocactus* will need a dormant period, so reduce your watering through the winter months, and then by March you should start to see new growth. It can be sensitive to frost so be careful to protect it during colder months.



References:

<https://miles2go.com/images/6776.jpg>

<https://planetdesert.com/products/fire-barrel-cactus-ferocactus-gracilis-coloratus>

http://www.llifile.com/Encyclopedia/CACTI/Family/Cactaceae/11980/Ferocactus_gracilis

www.Wikipedia.org Baja California climate - Search results - Wikipedia

Map Image: <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/mexico/baja-california>

Photo of Ferocactus belong to Elizabeth Jackson

Photo of ferocactus flower Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferocactus_gracilis#/media/File:Ferocactus_gracilis_ssp._coloratus_01.JPG



CSSA News

Liliana Cracraft

Chuck Staples, a long-time historian of the Cactus and Succulents Society of America, has made his books available at the CSSA Archives.

A very interesting book is entitled "A HISTORICAL RECORD OF AUTHORS OF CACTUS AND SUC-CULENT PLANT NAMES AND BOOKS FOR THE AMATEUR HOBBYIST." There are 2 volumes.

Visit the CSSA website at cactusandsucculentsociety.org Click on CSSA Archives, and you will be able to find Chuck's books under "Other Histories."

Chuck has been the CSSA Historian since 1932. He's 90 years young.