

Ming Fern



Very easy to grow and drought tolerant!

Asparagus retrofractus

- **Use:** Despite its name, the ming fern is a flowering plant and not a fern at all. It produces white flowers in the spring to early summer. It is in the same genus as the edible cultivated perennial vegetable, *Asparagus officinalis*, **but it is not edible**. It is an excellent house plant.
- **Exposure/Soil:** Ming Ferns do well in full sun as well as shaded locations. A native to arid regions of South Africa, this is a very drought tolerant plant. Use slow release fertilizer for best results. Needs lots of water in sun.
- **Growth:** It can reach a height of 4-6' when grown in the ground (but not cold hardy in our area of zone 8, but can also be grown in containers to achieve a much smaller plant.
- **Hardiness:** Zone 9-10 ; Annual/Houseplant Bring in when temps below 40.
- **Foliage:** Cascading green branches with soft, needle-shaped foliage. The actual leaves are tiny. The leaves and the sharp, small spines form where the cladode stems join the main branches. The spines have a bite, so it's a good idea to wear gloves when trimming or repotting. The tiny, scale-like, actual leaves of this plant appear where each cladode meets the stem. Stems create a zig zag branching structure, hence the common name of zig zag shrub.
- **Flower:** Small, fragrant, 6-petaled, white flowers in open axillary umbels bloom in spring to early summer. Flowers are often followed by small orange round fruits which mature to black.

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