



ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Desert Mallow or Mal de Ojo *Sphaeralcea ambigua*

DESCRIPTION: This southwestern native perennial is characterized by eye-catching globular flowers accented by silvery green foliage. A member of the Hibiscus family, it flowers in spring, with a lighter flowering with the summer rains. Bloom color varies within the species from orange to white, pink, rose, lavender, or red. Plants grow to four feet tall and five or six feet wide, but can be kept much smaller by limiting water and pruning. Desert Mallow is a larval food plant for Painted Lady and Arizona Skipper Butterflies.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use these plants in the xeriscape where they can be appreciated when in flower but not noticed at other times (they are not attractive the rest of the year).

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Down to 10°F.



Sun tolerance: Full sun to light shade.



Watering and feeding: Irrigation is unnecessary for established plants, except in the driest years. Supplemental watering in spring may extend the blooming season a few weeks.



Soil requirements: Will grow on nearly any soil.



Pruning: Cut to ground every winter to encourage compact, vigorous growth and copious flowers. Individual plants tend to live only a few years, but usually reseed freely.