



## *Agave geminiflora* Twin Flower Agave

**Description:** *Agave geminiflora* is a single, short-stemmed plant that forms dense, symmetrical rosettes of narrow, dark green leaves. The long, skinny leaves measure 2 feet long and 3/8 inch across. They are toothless along the margin, however, they may have fine, white marginal fibers. Because plants are all grown from seed, there is some variation in the amount of fibers along the leaf edge. Some plants may not have any at all. The flower stalk is a narrow spike 15 - 18 feet tall. The name *geminiflora* is derived from the fact that there are two flowers at each bract along the spike. The flowers are greenish near the base, flushed with red or purple above. As with all *Agave* species these plants only bloom once then die, and because it is a solitary (non-offsetting) type, it would need to be replaced.

**Habitat and Distribution:** *Agave geminiflora* is found in a small area of oak-woodland in the state of Nayarit, Mexico between about 3300-4600 feet elevation.

**Culture:** Plants are somewhat tender, needing frost protection in the Tucson area. The frost sensitivity makes this an ideal candidate for container culture. They may not freeze back when the winters are mild. In fact, I have seen four specimens in Tucson that do not show any frost damage at all. However, they may get damaged during cold winters, and you should be willing to provide some protection. When grown in containers, they require supplemental water regularly during the growing season. They have a moderately fast growth rate and can make a nice sized specimen in a short time. *Agave geminiflora* seems to be adaptable to either full sun, or partial shade. I have seen two plants in full sun where they make a nice compact shape. I have also seen a plant on the north side of a house that is larger, yet still very attractive. Plants are very low maintenance, however, they should be treated for the Agave Snout Weevil.

**Uses:** Due to its frost sensitive nature, Twin Flowered Agave is best used as a container plant in colder regions like Albuquerque, Las Vegas, and El Paso, where it can be grown under the protection of a covered patio. If you are willing to cover plants in the winter, they can be planted out in the ground. Plants can be planted in a variety of situations. They can be grown in full sun, or placed under the protection and shade of *Acacia greggii*, *Acacia minuta*, *Olneya tesota*, *Pithecellobium* species, or *Prosopis* species. They can also be planted on the north side of a house where they will receive winter shade and summer sun. This is always one of the hardest spots to find plants for, yet *Agave geminiflora* will fill that niche. In a xeriscape, Twin Flowered Agave can be used comfortably in the mini-oasis where its ornamental features can be viewed up close.

**Precautions:** Because of its more tropical origin, *Agave geminiflora* should be placed under the protection of an overhang or a nurse tree. If grown in full open exposure, be prepared to protect plants if temperatures drop too low, maybe about mid 20's F. Plants can be grown without protection from frost in Phoenix and Palm Springs. Protect plants from rabbits and javelina if need be. Remember that plants will die after flowering, although we do not know how long it will take for any one plant to bloom. Also, preventative treatments for the Agave

**Snout Weevil may be helpful.**

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