

# Myrtillocactus geometrisans



**Origin and Habitat:** This species is endemic to Mexico, where it is widespread in the central states. It occurs in Aguascalientes, México Federal District, Durango, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, México State, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Morelos and Zacatecas. It is known from at least 267 localities and has an area of occupancy of 51,000 km<sup>2</sup>

**Altitude:** It grows at elevations of 1,000 to 2,000 metres above sea level.

**Habitat and Ecology:** The species occurs in tropical deciduous forest, xerophyllous scrub and less frequently in grassland in some areas of the Chihuahuan desert. This species is widespread and locally common.

Some habitats are disturbed by goats. The species has many different uses in the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley, however the impact of harvest is low.

**Common Names include:**

**ENGLISH:** Our Father, Blue Flame, Bilberry Cactus, Whortleberry Cactus, Blue

Candle, Blue Myrtle cactus

**GERMAN (Deutsch):** Myrtillocactus

**ITALIAN (Italiano):** Mirtilloccactus

**LITHUANIAN (Lietuvių):** Mėlenis, Mėlynūnis

**RUSSIAN (Русский):** Миртиллокактус, Миртиллокактус геометрический

**SPANISH (Español):** Padre nuestro, Garambullo

**SWEDISH (Svenska):** Blåbärsraktusläktet, Blåbärsraktus

**Description:** *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* is a highly branched columnar candelabra like tree cactus that creates a dense growth of stems growing closely together. In nature grows up to 4.5 m tall, with the crown reaching up to 5 m in width.

**Stems:** Glaucous (blue grey) up to 7-10 cm thick. They have 5-8 ribs that are approximately 2.5 cm in depth with areoles about 2.5 cm apart.

**Spines:** Each areole may have up to 5-9 spines, but generally they have 3-5 spines about 5-12 mm long. Some spines but not awful.

**Flowers:** Rather smaller (2.5-3.7 cm) in relation to stem, greenish white.

**Blooming season:** It flowers between February and April and the flowers last for one day only. It starts blooming when it is about 60 cm tall.

**Fruit:** Very sweet, edible, dark red, oblong fruits 8-20 mm in diameter.

**Remarks:** *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* is commonly used as understocks for grafting cacti, (which is considered good and which is considered bad for certain). It's very easy to grow and is an excellent stock for small globular cacti that tend to rot off on their own roots and for slower growth seedlings such as *Ariocarpus* and *Turbinicarpus* that do not graft very well onto *Trichocereus spachianus* unless they are larger size pups. For these seedlings (and almost all other seedlings which are not cold hardy), the grafting stock *Myrtillocactus geometrizans* is a generally a better choice in warm climate.

