

## ***Aptenia cordifolia* Baby Sunrose<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

Inch long dark green foliage and bright red, aster-like flowers combine to make Baby Sunrose a spectacular hanging basket or ground cover for small, exposed, well-drained gardens (Fig. 1). Glossy foliage sparkles in the sun forming a superb backdrop displaying the 3/4 inch blossoms nearly year-round. The moderately thick, succulent stems are flexible and easily snapped. They appear to crawl along the soil and hug the ground forming a tight, almost clipped appearance. Plants grow no taller than about 3 to 4 inches.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Aptenia cordifolia*

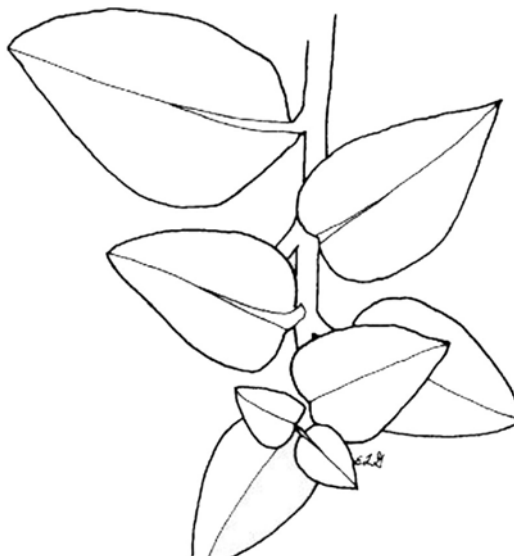
**Pronunciation:** ap-TEE-nee-uh kor-dif-FOLE-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Baby Sunrose

**Family:** *Isozoaceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)



**Figure 1.** Baby Sunrose.

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** hanging basket; cascading down a wall; ground cover; mass planting

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Description**

**Height:** 0 to .5 feet

**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

**Plant habit:** prostrate (flat)

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** red

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Pests and Diseases

If soil is kept too moist, roots can rot causing poor growth, chlorosis and plant death.

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam;

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

More often grown in a hanging basket in well drained media, its small stature and slow growth make it suited for a ground cover in a small landscape or rock garden. Locate it in front of an upright, grass or grass-like plant such as one of the ornamental grasses, Africa Iris or Spartina to make a stunning, contrasting combination.

Be sure to locate Baby Sunrose in the full sun, and keep the soil on the dry side once it becomes established to prevent root rot. It is best suited for a coastal landscape where wind and sandy soil keep the soil dry. A light fertilization two or three times during the year should be all the plant needs to maintain a good appearance. After watering plants in containers, be sure to allow the media to become fairly dry before the next irrigation. Established landscape plants should require little if any irrigation in most years. Do not plant in a landscape soil unless it is very well-drained.