

Xanthostemon species

Xanthostemon chrysanthus – Golden Penda is a tropical rainforest tree which is truly spectacular when in full flower and which has proved very hardy and durable in cultivation, even tolerating light frost. It produces masses of dense yellow flower heads in late Summer and Autumn, which attract nectar-feeding birds. The reddish new growth contrasts against the shiny dark green of the older leaves.

Whilst this tree may reach up to 40m in its natural environment (and produce a hard and durable timber), it responds quite happily to pruning to retain it as a tall shrub in cultivation. It originated in the rainforests of coastal far north Queensland, but its adaptability and beautiful floral display has seen its widespread use in cultivation. It is used a great deal as a street tree in south-east Queensland. Its natural climate has an annual rainfall of 800-4000mm, mainly in Summer, and a temperature range of 5°C- 40°C, where it grows on well-drained fertile soil. However, it is a very adaptable plant, and should be considered for all but the driest and coldest areas.

It can be grown from seed, although germination may be slow. It can produce flowers when only 3 - 4 years old. It is also readily propagated from cuttings.

Grow in full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil heavily enriched with humus. Mulching with compost or manure is beneficial. Pruning is generally not needed.

Propagation

Propagation of seed is not difficult and seed requires no pre-treatment although it may be slow. Use a medium of one part loam, one part peat moss and one part of a rich humus.