

Pelargonium australe – Ivy Leaf Geranium

Pelargonium australe or the Ivy Leaf Geranium is a small perennial growing to about 45cm in height and up to 1m wide. Leaves are rounded with 5 to 7 lobes varying from one to three and a half inches long. Flowers colour varies from an almost white with purple veining to mauve, about half to three quarters of an inch in diameter in many umbels of 4 to 12 blooms. and occurring from May to July in the northern hemisphere.

Requiring a light well-drained neutral to alkaline soil in a sunny position this one is very tolerant of pruning, and can be cut right down to the base in the Autumn when bringing them back indoors, or in the Spring to encourage lots of fresh growth. It can also be grown in containers that are placed outdoors in the summer and then brought into a protected position or a greenhouse for the Winter. Ivy leaf Geranium is frost hardy in Australia, down to -7°C and is easily propagated from seed which germinates in a range from 14 to 35 days at a minimum temperature of 13°C .

The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs).

They can also be grown in containers that are placed outdoors in the summer and then brought inside for the Winter. The plants need to be kept fairly dry in the Winter. Very tolerant of pruning, they can be cut right down to the base in the autumn when bringing them back indoors or in the spring to encourage lots of fresh growth.

Seed – best sown in early Spring, in a greenhouse on cooler areas in a medium potting mix. No pre-treatment is required, the seed germinates best with a minimum temperature of 13°C , germination usually taking place within 2 weeks though it can sometimes takes as long as two months. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in the greenhouse for at least their first Winter. If trying them outdoors, plant them out in early Summer and consider giving them extra protection during the Winter.

Cuttings succeed at almost any time in the growing season, but early Summer is the best time in order for the new plant to become established before winter.