

Callistemon species

Seed is fine and therefore difficult to spread evenly when sowing. Mix the seed with about twice the seed quantity of fine river sand and sow evenly as is spreading a pinch of salt.

Surface sow in a mixture of a good friable potting mixture to an equal to one and a half parts of clean river sand in a propagation tray about 5 – 7.5cm deep. The growing mixture should be damp but not drenched. Immerse the tray and mixture in a water bath. Allow to drain for a few minutes, then proceed. Sow seed lightly on the surface. Compress into mixture lightly using a piece of smooth wood then cover lightly with growing mixture to a depth of about 0.3cm of an inch at most. Cover the tray with clear polythene during daylight hours. Water lightly daily with a watering can with a dispersed nozzle so as not to disturb the seeds too much.

Place the tray in a warm dappled light position. Germination should take place within 14 - 21 days depending on temperature.

Once the shoots appear allow them to reach about 2.5 – 3cm tall then repot into a similar medium in individual small growing containers and allow to grow until about 10cm. Keep the seedlings in a warm dappled light position protected from slugs and snails.

Planting out

Like many Australian natives they do not appreciate their roots being disturbed so it is a good idea to pick a container when transplanting the first time that you can cut the bottom out of and then simply plant out the tree in the container in your chosen spot. It would be best to plant out in spring early summer once the danger of frost has passed. Apply a small amount of low phosphate fertiliser at planting time. Not too much.

Pick a site in full sun where there is good drainage. Soil type is not really a problem as long as it is not waterlogged and preferably not clayey. If your soil is heavy, try mixing in a quantity of sand to lighten it and make it drain better. Try not to create a sump around the tree where water will collect. Try to give the young plant protection from frost where possible, it becomes hardier as it is establishing itself.

Water the plant in well and then water lightly daily in the first few weeks and thereafter as needed – probably every few days in mid-summer.

The plant likes some root protection and extremes of ground temperature can cause it problems, particularly when young. Use a mulch around the trunk to do this – about 7.5cm extending out from the plant about 60cm all round.



WINTER GREEN AND FRUITING SCAPES