

## Nandina domestica – Heavenly Bamboo

Heavenly Bamboo is completely unrelated to Bamboo. Its common name comes only from its resemblance to bamboo due to the fine lacy foliage and the growth pattern of the plant, which is cane like. Nandina is classified as an evergreen but will lose its foliage if the temperature drops and the canes will die back to the ground at -10°C but will come back readily the next spring. It requires a deep rich moist soil in a sheltered sunny position. What makes this plant special is the colour it provides in the garden, during all four seasons of the year. In the Spring, the new foliage emerges as bright bronzed red, and is soon followed by large, 15 to 30cm panicles of creamy white flowers. As the season changes, the foliage becomes blue green, fading to light green. Clusters of bright green berries replace the flowers. By late Summer, the berries will ripen to a bright red. In the Autumn, the foliage colour again begins to change to shades of pink and red, ending the year with bright red leaves and berries. The berries will remain until they are discovered and enjoyed by the local birds.

Heavenly bamboo will slowly grow to 2.5m if it is left alone, however, it can be kept at a very compact size by pruning. This makes it an excellent choice for entryways, patios or foundation plantings. Multiple plantings may be used as a screen or hedge and it is also suitable for growing as a container plant, indoors.

Nandina may be grown in partial shade, but the foliage colours will be much more intense if it is grown in full sun, with a little shade in the hottest part of the day. Select a location that is protected from harsh winds.

Once established, this is one of the toughest plants, adapting itself to a wide variety of conditions. They prefer a reasonably rich, humus, acid soil, with a pH Range: 3.7 to 6.4. Preferably the soil should be kept moist at all times, but Nandinas will survive a drought quite well. It is best transplanted during the cooler months of Autumn. Careful pruning produces denser growth which is done in the Spring, by removing the oldest branches and any weak growth at ground level. You may remove up to ⅓ of the canes.

### Propagation

Propagation is reliable over time, but germination can be slow and patchy - be patient.

Soak seed overnight and sow to the depth of the seed.

Use a well draining propagation media of 65% coarse sand and 35% shredded peat moss or perlite and to be kept moist but not wet. Prick out into individual containers when large enough to handle.