

Kennedia species

The Kennedia Genus consists of around 16 species, all of which are Australian endemics, and all are either climbing or trailing plants. *K.rubicunda* is a vigorous climber whose branches twist around the stems of other plants. Under ideal conditions it can cover large areas although not to the same extent as some other members of the genus (eg. *K. retrorsa*, *K. prostrata* and *K. nigricans*). The leaves are glossy green and divided into three leaflets, a characteristic of the genus.

The typical "pea" flowers consist of 4 petals - the "standard", the "keel" and two "wings".

They are usually dull red in colour and occur in short racemes in the leaf axils in Spring. They are about 35mm long by 15mm across. The flowers are followed by flat seed pods 50 to 100mm long.

Kennedia are hardy garden plants which are not extensively cultivated except by Australian plant enthusiasts but the species deserves to be more widely grown and, if given room to spread, will be a long lasting addition to gardens in temperate to tropical areas. They tolerate dry conditions and would be a useful plant for growing on a fence, trellis or pergola.

Propagation

Propagation is easy from seed following pre-treatment to break the physical dormancy provided by the impervious seed coat. Pre-treatment can be carried out by abrasion or by the use of boiling water. Place the seed in near boiling water and allow to sit overnight, then proceed to sow as any other seed. The seed retains viability for many years. Cuttings strike well using firm, current season's growth.