

Bomarea species

Bomarea multiflora is a multi-stemmed climber from Colombia and Ecuador. It grows up to 2 m in height, with narrow, oblong, mid- to light green leaves. The narrowly funnel-shaped flowers appear in rounded clusters from late spring to autumn and are bright red to orange in colour, orange or yellow inside with red, brown or grown spots, followed by lobed, bright red fruit.

Bomarea at their best need a warm position with lots of sunlight (although can be grown under artificial lights). They are quite tough and the plants can survive milder areas if grown outside with roots that will survive to around 0 °C if a thick layer of mulch is provided but the plant may die back in prolonged cold periods but will recover by spring time when new growth emerges.

Keep plants well watered in the summer months and when winter sets in you should only provide a bare minimum amount of water and the plant should be kept almost dry.

Bomarea seed germinates best after a period of warm and cold stratification. First soak seed in warm water for about 12 hours. Then proceed to stratify. Warm stratification is done by placing the seed in lightly moist clean sand in a ziplock bag and keeping for 6 weeks at a temperature of 20°C+. Cold stratification is following the same procedure but storing the seed in the crisper in lightly moist sand for four weeks. During stratification check seed every few days and maintain the sand media in a lightly moist condition. Any seed that germinates during stratification should be sown immediately. Some growers also recommend that the seed is nicked lightly after stratification and before sowing.

Sow seed in a good quality well-draining potting mix. Just press the seed into the surface lightly, do not bury it. Place your seed container in a warm light position out of direct sunlight.

Prick young seedlings out into individual pots once large enough to handle and grow on as desired.

Planting out at 20cm or as desired. It is best to plant *Bomarea* in their permanent position as they initially resent being moved. Once established it can be divided successfully.