

Cobaea scandens – Cathedral Bells

Cobaea scandens, commonly known as Cathedral Bells or Cup and Saucer Vine is a very fast growing and showy evergreen woody climber from Mexico and Central America.

Leaves are a deep dark green, with a purplish tinge to foliage when grown in full sun. Leaflets are in pairs, dark green, with tendrils. The large bell-shaped flowers are up to 6cm in width. Flowers appear in late summer and are followed by large green pear-shaped fruit.

This is a vigorous climber that will grow 6-8m in one season which prefers a full sun site and a frost-free environment in a range of soils.

Propagation

Germination is straightforward with no need of pre-treatment other than soaking the seed overnight. Sow the seeds on their edge and just cover with compost. Keep soil damp but not wet, sealing in a polythene bag after sowing is helpful. Germination usually takes 21-30 days. When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant into 13cm pots and grow on in cooler conditions keeping them well watered. Gradually acclimatise to outdoor conditions for 10-15 days before planting out after all risk of frost in a sheltered spot in sun on ordinary well drained soil.

