

Hymenosporum flavum – Native Frangipani

Native Frangipani is one of the most popular Australian plants in cultivation. It is usually a small tree to about 8m but may be taller in tropical areas. It has a narrow, upright habit of growth with dark green, lance-shaped leaves about 100mm long by 40mm wide. The fragrant, strikingly showy cream to deep orange flowers occur profusely in Spring and early Summer, flowers age to yellow and are followed by rounded, pear-shaped capsules containing many winged seeds. It is fragrant, nectar producing and very popular with nectar seeking birds.

H. flavum is justly popular in cultivation as it is a hardy plant, even growing satisfactorily in dry climates if supplementary water is available. Originally a rainforest species it grows in most reasonably well drained soils or damp heavy loam or clay soils although those with a high organic content are preferred. Because of its generally narrow habit of growth, the plant can be recommended for small gardens. Plants flower best in an open, sunny position but can be grown successfully in shady areas. Established plants will tolerate at least moderate frost, certainly down to 5°C and will tolerate smog, in all making it an ideal choice for an attractive feature in a small inner city garden or courtyard. Propagation is easily carried out from seed but cuttings are also successful.

Strong wind can cause branches to fall, so a sheltered position is favoured. Some summer watering is needed for vigorous growth and yearly fertilising benefits this rainforest tree. Due to its strong roots, Native Frangipani is best planted away from structures, preferably at least 3m.

Propagation

Seed germination is uncomplicated without any pretreatment of seed. Soak seed overnight and spread on the surface of a good quality potting mix. Cover very lightly and maintain the media in a moist but not damp condition.

Prick out the young seedlings at any time after the second leaf stage and plant into forestry tubes and grow on as desired.

Plant out in their permanent position at any time after the danger of frost has passed. Try to reduce root disturbance as much as possible.