

## Clianthus puniceus – Kaka Beak

*Clianthus puniceus*, commonly known as Kaka Beak or Lobster Claw Plant is a shrub native to New Zealand's North Island and is related to the Australian Sturt's Desert Pea.

It is an evergreen shrub or scrambling climber that grows to some 3m in height. The foliage is pinnate and feathery in a dark grey-green with leaf stalks up to 15cm long and bearing several pairs of small leaflets.

Deep red flowers resembling a Parrots beak or Lobster claw are produced in racemes in the spring and early Summer, although it can flower throughout the year.

*Clianthus puniceus* is a moderately frost hardy evergreen plant best grown in full sun to semi shade in average garden soil. Prune back regularly to encourage bushy growth.

Soak seeds in hand tolerable hot water for 24 hours, then sow seed into pots or trays.

Keep in a warm place at a temperature of between 15-21°C.

After sowing, do not exclude light as this helps germination. Keep the surface of the compost moist but not waterlogged; germination will usually take 14-30 days.

When large enough to handle, transplant seedlings into 7.5cm pots or trays. Gradually acclimatise plants to cooler conditions for a few weeks before planting out after all risk of frost 60cm apart.

Aftercare Instructions.

For the best results, plant in a good well-drained soil and grow in full sun. Once plants are established prune each year after flowering, reducing shoots by approximately one-third.