

Hardenbergia species

Hardenbergia comptoniana

H. violacea

H. violacea alba

H. violacea rosea

Distribution: A widespread species occurring in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. It occurs in a variety of habitats from coast to mountains, usually in open forest/woodland and sometimes in heath.

Hardenbergia violacea is usually a climbing plant whose branches twist around the stems of other plants. It is moderately vigorous but rarely covers other plants so extensively as to cause damage. Shrubby forms without any climbing tendency are known. The leaves are dark, glossy green with prominent veins and are 75-100 mm in length.

The typical "pea" flowers consist of 4 petals - the "standard", the "keel" and two "wings". The flowers are usually violet in colour but pink, white and other colours are sometimes found. Some of these variations have been brought into cultivation.

Hardenbergia violacea is a popular and generally hardy garden plant which is widely grown. Given the wide range of the species, however, forms from drier areas may not be vigorous in tropical areas, and vice versa. Where possible, it is best to select forms from similar climatic zones to the area where they are to be cultivated.

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 - gently rub the seed between folded sandpaper - or by placing the seed in near boiling water and allowing it to soak overnight as the water cools. Hot water will cause the seed casing to shatter allowing the seeds to absorb water and swell. If a seed does not swell repeat the hot water treatment until it does. It is rare that it takes more than 2 attempts.

Sow the seeds in a good quality seed raising mix. Seeds should be sown to a depth of 2 - 3mm.

Keep your growing medium lightly moist - so that if you squeeze the medium in your hand it will give a few drops. Do not over-water. Place your pot or tray out of direct sunlight and in a shady position as light can slow germination.

Germination in 3 to 6 weeks at an optimal temperature of 20°C.

The seed retains viability for many years. Cuttings strike well using firm, current season's growth.

Propagation - some English information for colder climates

Scarify the seed or pre-soak as outlined. Sow spring in a warm greenhouse at 20°C. When they are large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and grow them on in the greenhouse for at least their first winter. Plant them out into their permanent positions in late spring or early summer, after the last expected frosts. Give the plants some protection from the cold for at least its first winter outdoors.

