

Grevillea species

As the plants are a diverse group, there are a wide range of conditions that they will grow under. The following generalized statements regarding the cultivation of grevilleas would apply to the majority of the plants in cultivation. Grevilleas flower best in sunny, dry locations although they will also grow in light shade. Plant in well-draining soil and be very careful of any fertilisers applied to these plants; many Grevillea, especially Western Australian species, are highly sensitive to phosphorus and the use of fertilizers high in this element can be fatal to these plants. They also do not like excessive watering and garden water tolerance or ability to grow near lawns will be exceptions rather than the rule. Regular pruning after flowering is recommended to enhance and rejuvenate flowering and plant growth. Most varieties are drought tolerant, as well as frost hardy down to -6°C.

Propagation

WHEN TO SOW – in warm areas, or in a glass house - at any time in frost prone areas sow when the danger of frost has passed.

WHERE TO GROW – This species performs best in well-drained soils and flower best in open, sunny positions to part shade. They prefer acidic soils but perform well in most soil types.

SOWING – place seeds in a cup of near boiling water, leave overnight then drain and sow. Fill a pot or tray with a good general propagating mix, wet thoroughly and compress. Sow seeds thinly on the surface and cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep the soil moist. Cover with clear polythene until germination in about 2 - 5 weeks.

CULTIVATION – Thin the seedlings out if crowded, transplant or pot at 4 inches. Disturb the roots as little as possible. Water in well and water regularly until established, thereafter as needed. Protect against snails and slugs during germination and seedling stage.

Like most members of the Protea family, Grevilleas have a distinctive root system ("Proteoid roots") consisting of tight groupings of many small "rootlets". These are believed to enable the plants to efficiently take up nutrients from the nutrient-deficient soils where many of the species occur naturally. In cultivation this means that the plants can be adversely affected by fertilizers, particularly phosphorus. It is generally recommended that grevilleas and other Proteaceae be fertilised only with low-phosphorus, slow-release fertilisers or not be fertilised at all.

Hard coated species of grevillea, principally from Western Australia require some pre-treatment before sowing to promote germination. The traditional way to overcome the hard shell has been to either nick the outer curve of the seed or to soak overnight in

initially very hot tap water. Recent experimentation with smoke water products has established that many of these species benefit from smoke water treatment.



LINKED GREEN AND FISHING SEED

