

Dais cotinifolia – Pom Pom Tree

Dais cotinifolia commonly known Pompon Tree is a hardy, fast growing, deciduous, small tree growing up to 6m tall. Its natural home is the eastern part of South Africa where it grows on the margins of forests, wooded hill slopes and in stony kloofs.

It bears masses of very showy, fragrant pink, pom-pom like flowers in mid Summer. It begins flowering whilst still young. The slightly blue-green foliage is attractive in spring when it has scattered pink leaves in the crown.

Evergreen in mild climates, deciduous in cool climates, it is a popular garden subject for sun or semi-shade and is ideal for small gardens and containers. It is best in a well-drained soil with reliable moisture and added humus. It needs little maintenance, just prune any overlapping or irregular growth. It is frost tolerant and moderately drought resistant once established.

Propagation

Sow seed in spring or early summer in seed trays filled with a well-drained medium. Cover the seed lightly with fine milled bark or sand, place in a shady position and keep moist.

Optimum germination is 22 to 25°C.

To improve the germination, treat the seed with a fungicide that prevents damping off.

The young seedlings can be potted up as soon as they are big enough to handle.

The trees grow fast and reach their full height within 4 to 5 years and flowering from about their second year.

The trees can be lightly pruned if necessary, young trees becoming very bushy if the leader is trimmed. Flowers are produced on the previous year's growth, so any pruning should be done after flowering.