

GREVILLEAS

Grevilleas are deservedly popular garden plants. They have interesting and beautiful flowers, bloom over extended periods, have attractive leaves, are generally hardy and come in a range of sizes. There are hundreds of different grevilleas, many of which make excellent garden plants. They are versatile plants; they can serve many different purposes in a garden. They can be grown in beds, in rockeries, in pots or tubs. They can create a screen, windbreak or hedge. Grevilleas have been grown as standards to display their beautiful flowers.

Description

Most grevilleas are fast growing. They range from prostrate groundcovers to large trees.

The leaves of grevilleas can be soft or leathery, flat or wiry, toothed or divided. Some have prickly leaves. The leaf colour ranges from bright green to grey to bronze.

The flowers may be spider-like (the spider-flowers), toothbrush-shaped or cylindrical. Some grevilleas have erect flowers, in others they are pendant. There is a variety of colours, but many are white, pink, red or yellow. Many grevilleas have a long flowering period. Some species will flower throughout the year. The white or cream flowered grevilleas often have perfumed flowers.

Cultivation

Grevilleas grow naturally in a variety of soils and climates. Most prefer well-drained soils. Some grow well in clay loams, and some in soils without good drainage.

Many grevilleas grow naturally in full sun and these flower better in a sunny spot. Those that grow naturally as undershrubs are suited to shady positions where they get shelter from the hot sun.

Most grevilleas are adapted to low-fertility soils. They are very efficient at obtaining phosphorus from soils and the addition of phosphorus may be harmful. They usually respond positively to slow-release low-phosphate fertilisers.

They respond well to pruning. Regular pruning will extend their life. It is best started when the plant is young.

Propagation

Propagate by using seed, cuttings or by grafting. Seed is usually released soon after the seed case ripens. If you want to collect seed, tie a stocking over the fruit to catch the seed. Because grevilleas hybridise readily, seed collected in a garden may produce plants which are not the same as the plant from which the seed was collected.