

KANGAROO PAWS

HOW TO GROW KANGAROO PAWS

These plants have undoubtedly some of the world's most unusual and striking flowers. They fit perfectly into any garden situation, both native and exotic. They do not require a great amount of garden space and make ideal garden subjects.

Kangaroo Paws are available in a wide range of sizes and colours. By careful selection of the different varieties, it is possible to have different Kangaroo Paw plants flowering between mid - winter and the end of summer with occasional autumn flowers produced.

Kangaroo Paws make ideal cut flowers. Most plants will generally produce between 2 and 4 flowers per plant in the first year and up to 20 flowers per plant in the second year.

SITE SELECTION

Most Kangaroo Paws will adapt to most garden situations provided that it is not too shady, cold or damp. The best situation is full sun or partial overhead shade in a relatively open position which will allow the plants' leaves to dry off quickly after watering.

SOIL PREPARATION

Well drained soils are essential. These can be sandy, sandy loam or gravel soils. Clay soils need their drainage improved with the addition of sand.

Soil preparation is not essential, but improved flower production and plant health will result from improving the soil to a depth of about 25cms with materials such as Bio-ganic soil improver.

It is recommended that the soil be mulched with a covering of sawdust or wood chips to help lower the soil temperature and help moisture retention during summer. Feed with Osmocote for native plants

PLANTING

Kangaroo Paws can be planted out at any time of the year. However, if planted during the summer, they will need to be kept well watered. It is best to avoid planting out on hot days.

For best effect, try planting them in groups of 3, 5 or 7 with a spacing of 50cm between plants. This will give a spectacular show of flowers.

WATERING

Plants grown under light top shade will need less water than those grown in full sun. Water is best applied to the soil around the plants rather than direct to the plant foliage. If Kangaroo paws are to be overhead watered, it is best done in the morning so the leaves can quickly dry off. Too much water left on the leaves for a long time encourages ink-spot disease.

Kangaroo Paw plants which are watered through summer will be encouraged to produce earlier and later flowers.

MAINTENANCE

Kangaroo Paws can be grown with or without fertilising. However, for best results, an application of a liquid garden fertiliser. at half strength or a slow release fertiliser (Osmocote for native plants).

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

Snails - controlled by snail pellets

Aphids, caterpillars - use a systemic insecticide.

Fungus - use Mancozeb fungicide.

It is best to prevent Ink-spot disease from spreading by spraying with Mancozeb fungicide, keeping snails controlled, not over-watering and by keeping plants growing strongly.

Strong, healthy plants will often out-grow ink-spot disease. Weak plants which are over-watered will often contract ink-spot disease.

CONTAINER GROWING

Kangaroo Paws make excellent pot plants. Use a good potting soil and fertilise regularly with a liquid fertiliser at half strength or use a slow release fertiliser. Container grown plants can be grown in full sun or part shade. An eye-catching arrangement can be achieved by planting a mixed group of Kangaroo Paws in a large tub.

FLOWER PRODUCTION

Kangaroo Paw flowers make excellent vase subjects. They should be picked when the first two florets on the spike have opened and placed in water as soon as possible. If the flowers are picked above one of the leaf scales on the flowering stem, a second flowering will generally follow. The longevity of cut flowers can be increased by cut flower preservatives.