

Fact Sheet



Grevilleas

Grevilleas are a large genus of over 270 species named after Charles Francis Greville, one of the founders of the Royal Horticultural Society who amongst other deeds was also responsible for introducing the geranium into cultivation.

All grevilleas are endemic to Australia, although a few species also occur in Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia.

Evergreen woody plants, there is a huge range of colour in flowers, foliage and form, ranging from groundcovers, small to tall shrubs or large trees. They have a long flowering season and are wonderful bird attracting plants, in particular species with red flowers which tend to have extra nectar supplies.

As species occur naturally all over Australia, cultural requirements for grevilleas will vary for each species and cultivars dependant upon their origin. Fundamentally they all prefer a sunny position with good drainage essential although once established they will tolerate poor soil and drought conditions.

Grevilleas have fairly shallow roots hence mulching is beneficial however keep mulch away from stems as this may promote fungal disease. They also make excellent container specimens. As with all species of the proteaceae family they will benefit from fertilising with a low phosphorous food such as Osmocote for natives. A light prune after flowering will help maintain shape and encourage bushier growth.

Grevilleas can be propagated from seed or semi mature cuttings taken in summer-autumn. Rooting is encouraged by use of hormone powder and roots take about 2-3 months to develop. Some species, especially those from Western Australia are difficult to propagate hence are grafted. Tissue culture propagation of grevilleas is also becoming an increasing trend.

They suffer no great pest or disease problems, the main reason for plant losses can be root rot due to poor drainage. Occasionally scale (treat with White Oil) or aphids (spray with pyrethrum) can attack plants as can borers (cut off damaged area or inject holes with methylated spirits).

Larger plants can suffer wind damage so if planted in an area where this may occur it is advisable to use a stake to secure plants.

In our nursery we sell a wide variety of grevilleas, listed below is a brief description of our most popular varieties.



Groundcovers

G.biternata - In Tasmania this is a very effective groundcover particularly on dry embankments, prune off any tall shoots, will grow to 2-3m wide, white scented flowers.

G.x gaudichaudii - Dense groundcover spreads 3-4m wide, red toothbrush like flowers needs well drained soil, fast growing.

G.'Pink Pearl' - Dense leafy spreading plant to 3-4m wide, bright coral pink flowers.

G.'Poorinda Royal Mantle' - Can spread 6-7m wide, great landscape plant, light red flowers.

G.lanigera - Grows about 1.5m wide, woolly foliage, red and cream flowers, good rockery plant.

Shrubs



G.rosmarinifolia - Brilliant dense shrubs 2m x 2m, excellent hedging plants, pink/red flowers though a cream form is available. Probably our most widely sold grevillea.

G.'Coconut Ice' - 2m x 2m shrub, attractive reddish flowers.

G.'Ned Kelly' - Also known as 'Masons Hybrid', shrub 1.5m high x 2m across, deeply lobed leaves flowers apricot to red, similar to another one of our more popular types G.'Superb' which is about 1m x 1m and flowers a little darker than 'Ned Kelly'.

G.'Robyn Gordon' - Another popular beautiful grevillea about 1.5m tall x 2m wide with abundant deep crimson flowers.

G.'Copper Rocket' - Useful screen plant, grows around 3m x 2m, pink tooth brush flowers.

G.'Ivanhoe' - 3m x 4m wide, hardy bird attractant shrub, commercially grown for it's deeply toothed foliage, red toothbrush flowers.

G.'John Evans' - Compact low shrub about 1m x 1m, similar foliage to rosmarinifolia, red and cream flowers, extremely hardy.

G.robusta - Silky Oak, large tree used extensively in parks and street plantings throughout Australia, fast growing with rich orange blossoms, generally too large for average gardens though in Tasmania it will not reach the heights it does in warmer climates, may still reach around 10m though.

Naturally there are many more varieties available, too many to mention briefly here, suffice to say there is an extremely wide choice from which to select. For those wishing to know more about grevilleas, there are many excellent publications, none better than 'Banksias, Waratahs and Grevilleas' by Wrigley and Fagg.



FACT: The inner bark of Grevillea leucadendron was made into a paste by Australian aborigines and rubbed on nursing womens' breasts to encourage milk production.