

Red Cestrum

This Mexican native shrub has arching branches reaching almost 3 metres in height. Red Cestrum develops large numbers of tubular, bright-red flowers in dense clusters on the twigs' ends that attract butterflies. The pretty display lasts from spring to early autumn. Pollinated flowers develop violet-coloured berries that attract birds. The evergreen leaves are lance-shaped and hirsute. High temperatures are no problem as long as soil moisture is plentiful. Alkaline soil may result in chlorotic foliage. Yellow leaves may also be caused by full sun in unfavourable conditions. The ground should be fertile and well drained. Light pruning can be done at any time of the year. Low temperatures are tolerated down to -9°C, but prolonged periods of frost may harm the leaves. They quickly recover in spring, since the shrub responds well to feeding. Pruning should be performed during dormancy, but the shrub tolerates clipping at any time to keep a neat shape. For this purpose, pinching out the tips of young branches is appropriate. *C. elegans* should not be exposed to drying winds, which may cause necrotic leaf-margins. Regular irrigation in summer is vital, but should be reduced in winter. Red Cestrum makes an accent bush in mixed borders both in private and public gardens. It grows well in containers when drainage, feeding and irrigation are well maintained. Flowering branches last quite long as cut flowers. Propagation is generally performed by softwood cuttings that need some shelter to retain moisture.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1800 ppm)
Hardiness	: -9°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 1 m-3 m
Spread	: 1.5 m-4 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: bright red
Size	: 6 cm - 10 cm
Period	: May - September

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 1 cm - 1.5 cm