

Plume Flower, *Cockscomb*

Originating in southeast Asia, the Cockscomb is a brightly flowering annual with an erect, bushy habit. Often seen in Arriyadh’s gardens, as a pot plant and also planted for winter colour, the loose, feathery, plume-shaped flowers have a wide range of colours, including magenta, yellow and orange. The fresh green, pointed leaves are often bronze-hued. The plant will grow to a height of 1 metre. Propagated by seeds, preferably in the flowering site since they resent disturbance, they like rich well-draining soils in full sun and thrive on sandy soils. Regular irrigation is required and the plants are not very frost-tolerant. Like all annuals planted for winter colour in Arriyadh in October/November, their life is shortened even more by the onset of hot weather in the spring, and plants soon become straggly. Relatively pest-free but maintenance-intensive, the dying flowers should be removed regularly to keep plants looking good, and eventually they will have to be removed. Apart from its use as a colourful ground cover or as a pot plant, *C. argentea* has no great landscape value.

GENERAL

Origin	: tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: direct sowing, cuttings
Maintenance	: high

CONDITIONS

Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: low (700 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

SHAPE

Type	: annual
Height	: 0.2 m-1 m
Spread	: 0.3 m-1 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: red, orange, yellow, magenta
Size	: 2 cm
Period	: January - March

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.2 cm

