

Moss Vervain

GENERAL

- Origin : sub-tropical
- Vigour : fairly fast growing
- Humidity : semi-humid, very humid, extremely humid
- Propagation : sowing and pricking out, cuttings
- Maintenance : moderate

CONDITIONS

- Urban climate : vulnerable
- Dessication : vulnerable
- Stagnant water : vulnerable
- Irrigation : medium
- Salinity/ppm : moderate (2000 ppm)
- Hardiness : +3°C

SHAPE

- Type : perennial
- Height : 0.1 m-0.15 m
- Spread : 0.4 m-1 m
- Foliage : evergreen

FLOWER

- Colour : purple
- Size : 0.5 cm - 1 cm
- Period : April - September

FRUIT

- Type of fruit : capsule
- Fruit size : 0.2 cm

A wide range of Vervains are grown seasonally for their colourful floral display. This Moss Vervain is a ground-hugging perennial from tropical and subtropical south America with finely dissected, evergreen foliage and terminal clusters of tubular flowers. In spring, the flowers appear in hues of white, lilac, purple and violet, and in Arriyadh they often re-bloom after summer when temperatures fall. The flowers are heavily visited by butterflies. The plants thrive in fertile soils that drain well, either exposed to full sun or with some shade. With lack of light, they grow less dense, forming some upright shoots up to about 15 cm. They make excellent groundcovers to accompany roses, or for spilling over edges. In open ground, they take heat if watered frequently, and appropriate irrigation is also required to thrive in containers. The mossy covers are attractive on slopes where they contrast with boulders and upright plants. Usually fast-growing plants, they respond to ongoing drought with stagnant growth, burnt leaf edges or loss of the plants altogether. Moss Vervains do not tolerate frost, but low temperatures are accepted, sometimes leading to reddish foliage without damage. Propagation is done commercially by sowing, but is also possible by cuttings or division, since the stems root where they touch the ground. Since the plants are rarely infested by pests and diseases, maintenance is limited to weeding until the plants become established. Fertiliser is best applied by slow-releasing granules in the spring and autumn.

