

Pistol Bush

The Pistol Bush is a shrub of 3 metres in height found in the undergrowth of coastal forests in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. It provides a good background shrub in Arriyadh, preferably in a sheltered environment. It grows an oval or round shape, but may be trained as a standard, revealing a rough, dark-brown bark. Large, evergreen leaves are shiny on top and have a lush impact. Flowering begins in February and may last until August. The conspicuous flowers appear on upright spikes and are white with purple lines. When pollinated by bees they develop into 3 × 1 cm capsules that burst open with a loud crack to release ripe seeds. This procedure made the Pistol Bush earn its common name. Both the vivid growth and its prolonged flowering period make this shrub a decorative specimen in small gardens and public parks. It may grow as a dense screen, flowering hedge or act as background planting. The large leaves do not take shearing, but pruning is possible at any time of the year. Light frosts are tolerated, but plants should not be exposed to drying winds. Owing to its forest origins, it responds to composted soil and partial sun with healthy growth. It responds well to fertiliser and does best with frequent irrigation in summer. Propagation is possible from both seeds and cuttings. Seedlings often appear in mulch and can be potted to multiply the shrub. It does not become invasive in desert climates, and is generally free of pests and diseases.



GENERAL

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

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: vulnerable
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 3 m
Spread	: 3 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: white, pink
Size	: 10 cm
Period	: February - August

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 3 cm