

## Egyptian Star Cluster

### GENERAL

Origin	: tropical
Vigour	: normal growth rate
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	: high
Salinity/ppm	: low (1000 ppm)
Hardiness	: 0°C

### SHAPE

Type	: sub-shrub, shrub
Height	: 1 m-1.2 m
Spread	: 0.5 m-0.9 m
Foliage	: evergreen

### FLOWER

Colour	: white, pink, lilac, red, purple
Size	: 6 cm - 10 cm
Period	: April - October

### FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.6 cm

Egyptian Stars is a tender, perennial herb or subshrub native to eastern Africa and the southern Arabian peninsula, where plants are found in the wild on the edge of woodland and in scrub. Many varieties of Pentas have been bred, and they are suitable for garden planting in Arriyadh. With an upright growth habit, this shrub will reach a height of 1 metre and a width of about half this. It has quite hairy, dark-green, lanceolate, deeply veined leaves up to 8 cm long and showy clusters of never-ending, red, white, lavender, purple, or pink, star-shaped flowers. Flowering begins in spring and continues until the autumn. Plants require a neutral, moderately fertile, well-drained soil that retains moisture well, and should be planted in light shade or sun, but not in direct sun during the hottest part of the day. Irrigation and fertilising should be regular throughout the growing season, and less in winter. Egyptian Stars is not frost-tolerant, and is sometimes planted as an annual and not a perennial; in a sheltered location in Arriyadh, however, it may become a long-lived shrub. In hot weather, the plant grows fast and stays in bloom constantly. Propagation is by cuttings and from seed. Prone to white fly, they are generally disease-resistant. A neat compact plant can be maintained by pinching out the tips in spring: flowers are self-dead-heading. These are attractive plants for both containers and the garden. The bright red variety in the 'Graffiti' series has a spectacular colour and is a great nectar source.

