BURNCOOSE NURSERIES PART OF THE CAERHAYS ESTATE

Epimedium - Growing Guide

Caring For Epimedium

Barren Wort / Bishop's Mitre

Some species of Epimedium are evergreen while others are deciduous. All are rhizomatous perennials from the Mediterranean to temperate East Asia and are found in woodland scrub, shady and rocky places. They have leathery heart shaped leaves with spiny tips and spiny margins. The leaves are often bronze tinted in spring and colour well with red tints in the autumn.

The evergreen species which we offer are: E. x versicolor and E. x youngianum

The deciduous species are: E. grandiflorum and E. x warleyense

Epimediums flower in the spring and early summer with saucer and cup shaped flowers which often have spurs. The range of colours and flower sizes is considerable ranging from yellow, pink and white to red or purple. The flowers are borne on stalks which stand proud to the leaves and appear in racemes or panicles.

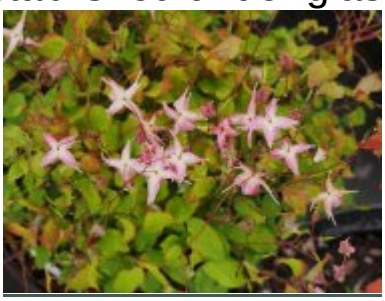
These plants have become increasingly popular in our catalogue in recent years partly because of the introduction of some attractive and unusual new varieties (eg E. 'Spine Tingler') as well as a wider appreciation of their various uses in the garden. Evergreen epimediums make excellent spreading groundcover in a border around and below other trees and shrubs. Taller growing species naturalise well in a woodland context where they provide a fine show in spring. Smaller growing and deciduous forms look good in a rockery or smaller border.

Epimediums are fully frost hardy although they like shelter from cold easterly winds. They grow best in fertile soil in moist but well drained

conditions. E. x versicolor will tolerate full sun and much drier conditions but most epimediums are best grown in partial shade.

The best tip for caring for them, especially with evergreen species, is to clip back all the old leaves in late winter well before the flower spikes form to encourage a whole set of vibrant new leaves which will offset the flowers better than the slightly tatty older ones. Perhaps even a light mulch or feed after the clipping back.

Seeds from epimediums can be sown as soon as they are ripe in a cold frame. However these plants can readily be lifted and divided after flowering. Root rhizome cuttings can also be taken in winter and established under glass.



E. 'Akebono'

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E. 'Amber Queen'

E. grandiflorum

E. grandiflorum

E. grandiflorum

E. 'Pink Champagne'

E. 'Pink Champagne'

E. 'Pink Champagne'

E. 'Spine Tingler'

E. versicolor 'Sulphureum'

E. warleyense

E. warleyense

E. x youngianum 'Niveum'

E. x youngianum 'Roseum'

E. x youngianum 'Roseum'

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