

Kniphofia - Care Guide

Caring For Kniphofia

Red hot poker, Torch lily

These are both evergreen and deciduous rhizomatous perennials from the mountains and upland areas of southern Africa where they grow along stream sides or moist places in grassland areas. Nevertheless these plant species, and their numerous named cultivars, have adapted well as popular herbaceous plants in so many of our herbaceous borders.

These are clump forming plants with multiple flower heads in established clumps. In deciduous varieties the leaves are grass like while, in evergreen ones (eg *K. rooperi*), they are broader or strap-shaped and much longer in length (up to 5ft in some cases). The flowers are very attractive to bees and appear at the end of the flower spikes as pendulous racemes of red, orange, yellow or white tubular flowers. Some open red and then turn to yellow later on giving a bicoloured effect.

Kniphofia grow best in deep fertile soil in full sun. Improved soils with the addition of dung or leaf mould before planting are good practice since, in reality, your Kniphofia will remain in one place as an expanding clump for many years in one position. Young plants in their first season or two may need mulching to give winter protection.

Propagation is easiest by division of established clumps to remove side shoots or offsets in early spring. Evergreen forms can be cut back to their crowns in winter to encourage the production of more abundant offsets. In the herbaceous border or near other gardens growing different coloured Red hot pokers the seeds are unlikely to come true.





Kriophila & Agapanthus



K.'Coperi' & Bellardia
veruculata



K.'Atlanta' & Festuca
siliculata

K.'Royal Castle' &
K.'Tawny King' &
Perovskia 'Taiga'



K.'Royal Standard' &
Verbascum olympicum

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