

Lophomyrtus - Growing Guide

Growing Lophomyrtus

This is a genus of only two species with many and varied forms of evergreen New Zealand foliage plants which are closely related to myrtus and have many similar characteristics.

A national collection of lophomyrtus has just been established in Haywards Heath and these are clearly plants which are growing in popularity in the UK especially after a long run of mild winters. At Ventnor Botanic Gardens in the Isle of Wight there are large specimens of different forms growing, often, as small trees. They come into their own for their leaf form in winter although the flowers are fine enough too and smell like myrtles.

Lophomyrtus with variegated green, pink and white leaves prefer partial shade. Those with red or purple leaves show off to best effect in full sun. These plants prefer fertile well drained soil but will certainly grow well in poorer soils.

Lophomyrtus have rounded or bullate leaves. The white flowers appear in June or July, sometimes later, and are followed by dark black-red berries. The tallest Lophomyrtus x ralphii varieties ('Kathry', 'Multicolour' and 'Red Dragon') can grow 6-8ft, occasionally larger. They are upright shrubs or small trees with a spread of 4-5ft in maturity.

The dwarf forms of L. x ralphii ('Little Star', 'Pixie') make attractive rockery plants or in containers on the patio which are brought into the greenhouse for the winter.

Lophomyrtus are easily frost hardy to -5°C and probably more in a well sheltered position.

Propagation from semi ripe new growth is fairly straightforward with bottom heat. The seed should be sown in trays as soon as ripe and will germinate in the spring.



Lophomyrtus 'Pixie'



Lophomyrtus 'Kathryn'



Lophomyrtus 'Kathryn'



Lophomyrtus 'Kathryn'



Lophomyrtus 'Little Star'



Lophomyrtus 'Red Dragon'

Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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