

## Plumbago - Growing Guide

### **Growing Plumbago Auriculata**

Commonly known as 'Leadwort'

These are hugely popular subtropical South African plants with blue or white flowers which make the most perfect conservatory plants and flower away for months even with little care or attention. It is probably our best selling conservatory or greenhouse plant.

Plumbago can be grown as a free standing shrub although its inclination is to climb up a trellis or frame. In a frost free greenhouse with some winter heat it will not lose its leaves. More normally, in a cold greenhouse, it will shed its leaves and final flowers in late autumn and go dormant.

This is the moment to give it a hard pruning to encourage vigorous new shoots from the base and from the roots where they touch the surface of the soil. The new growth rather than the older stems will produce the most flowers.

Plumbago can be grown outside in full sun in well drained soil in milder areas but you may well lose them in a cold winter. Better to grow them in large containers as patio plants or to dig up the dormant roots after pruning and bring them inside rather than risk a sharp early frost.

The leaves of *P. auriculata* are oblong and bright green; sometimes blue grey. The blue and white flowering forms are identical. The flowers start in June and July and carry on until autumn if you keep feeding and potting them on. These are greedy plants which relish the attention you give them. The flowers are in dense terminal clusters or corymbs of 10 to 15 individual tubed sky blue or pure white flowers. The clusters can be up to 6in across.

Red spider mite and white fly can be a problem with plumbago and vigilance is necessary. If you grow these plants in pots stand them outside if infested so that the problem will reduce. Always remove all dead leaf litter from in or under these plants as plant rubbish encourages mealy bug attacks.

Propagation by lifting and dividing root suckers in early spring is simple. So are soft cuttings from the new growth taken at any time in the summer or autumn.



*Plumbago auriculata*



Plumbago auriculata 'Alba'



Plumbago auriculata



Plumbago auriculata



Plumbago auriculata 'Alba'

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/XfXsF7hdgLg?rel=0>

### **Pruning - Video Tip**

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/cQbUGWQV1GU>

### **Taking Semi-ripe Cuttings - Video Tip**

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/H4l955JuzTQ>

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