BURNCOOSE NURSERIES PART OF THE CAERHAYS ESTATE

Rhodochiton - Growing Guide

Growing Rhodochitons

Rhodochiton atrosanguineus, with its long black or reddish-purple tubular flowers, usually raises a wry smile for its obvious penile connotations. However, growers need to understand the plant to appreciate its qualities and, especially, that it need not be regarded just as a summer flowering annual.

Rhodochitons are, in fact, perennial climbers from the woodlands of Mexico. They flower continuously for many months and well on into autumn if given sufficient nutrition to thrive.

Outside they are excellent plants for growing on a trellis, archway or freestanding climbing frame. Their vigorous new growth will quickly twine around and through any support and can readily grow to 10ft in height in a season.

Rhodochitons are frost tender and, in many parts of the country, they will be killed by the first frosts. However, although the plants may be expected to die down to ground level, in warmer coastal or frost free situations the roots need not die if given a good mulch protection. If the plants are grown in containers these can be moved into a frost free conservatory or greenhouse in early autumn. They may well then not die back completely and should reshoot vigorously next spring.

Rhodochitons are greedy plants and will grow in proportion to your ability to feed them copiously and pot them on on demand.

Seed will normally be evident by September. This can be sown in a warm greenhouse straight away or in the spring.

If you do treat this plant as an annual pleasure then remember to collect the seed and start off new plants again next year. From seedling to flowering size should only be a matter of a few weeks.

When growing these plants only under glass watch out for red spider mite infestations and control with a spray or simply put the plants outside where the problem will reduce.

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Rhodochiton atrosanguineum 'Purple Bells'

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

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