

Spartium junceum - Growing Guide

Growing Spartium Junceum

Spanish Broom

This is a genus of a single species which is closely related to genista and has many very similar characteristics. It grows in the Mediterranean regions of southern Europe, North Africa and the Crimea but is completely frost hardy.

Spartium junceum is a deciduous shrub with erect, cylindrical, rush-like dark green stems which only have the occasional small leaf with silky hairs on their undersides. This wonderful plant has a profusion of fragrant golden yellow pea-like flowers in terminal racemes on all of its many twigs. The racemes can be up to 18in long and each flower is about 1in long.

As these photographs show a most spectacular display of up to 10ft in height and, in maturity, a similar spread.

Soon after flowering the plant produces a similar profusion of flattened dark brown pea-like seed pods with five to twelve seeds in each. The seeds can be sown under glass or in a cold frame as soon as they are fully ripe or in the spring. This is a plant which will readily self-seed itself in a border or on a bank so obtaining new young plants should be easy even if rabbits tend to like the seedlings.

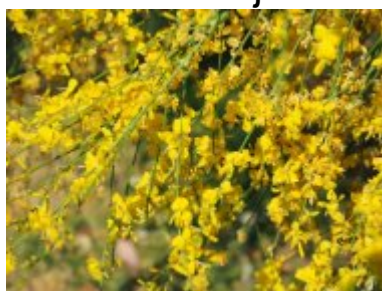
S. junceum grows best in hot dry conditions and will tolerate poor soil. It will also tolerate chalk. While it is normally found abundantly in coastal or seaside locations you can grow it more or less anywhere in full sun.

There are various different ways of pruning this lovely shrub. It grows so quickly that it soon becomes straggly and bare at the base. You can prune it hard, almost back to the base, say one year in three to rejuvenate it. Alternatively, you can give it a light clipping in the spring to encourage

regrowth which will flower a bit later in the year (July to August rather than June to July). Similarly you can clip it back lightly after the first flowering in the hope that more flowers will then appear in September or early October. Another solution to the appearance of the plant when not in flower is to grow it within and above something else. Gorse is ideal on a hot scruffy bank but, at Ventnor botanics, a surround of smaller growing phormiums is rather more formal and just as good.



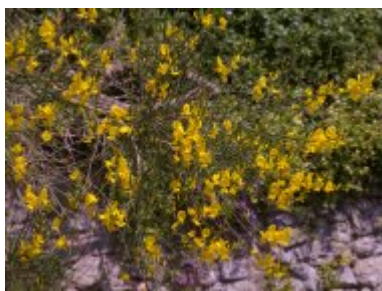
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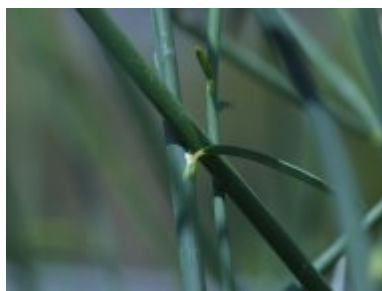
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