

Tripterygium regelii - Growing Guide

Growing Tripterygium Regelii

This is an attractive and unusual deciduous climbing plant which has, somewhat undeservedly, fallen in popularity in recent years. It is a native of Japan, Korea and Manchuria and was first introduced to the UK after 1905.

As a juvenile plant it can have a rambling shrubby habit but quickly develops into a vigorous climber which can grow up to 30ft tall. It requires wires or trellis to twine around initially as it gets going on a wall and is not self-clinging. However it can readily perform up a dead tree or over another tall shrub where its angular warted stems stand out in winter.

The flowers are yellowish white and produced in panicles at the end of the shoots supplemented by clusters in the axils of the terminal leaves. The inflorescence can therefore be 8 or 9 in long and 2 or 3in wide and is covered in a brown felt.

After flowering in June or July this plant produces three-winged fruits which are initially pale green then turning lighter brown. The plant takes its name from these fruits.

In Cornwall *T. regelii* has proved perfectly hardy when established. Even if there is some dieback after a very cold winter the plant quickly recovers and reshoots. It can readily be pruned back hard in the spring to encourage more new growth and, consequently, more flowers later.

Full sun encourages better flowering although a vigorous climber of this sort requires fertile soil which does not dry out.

Layering of this plant is quite straightforward. The elm-like seeds should be sown in pots or in the cold frame as soon as they are ripe but cuttings of semi-ripe new growth propagate easily too.



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