

Vestia foetida - Growing Guide

Growing Vestia Foetida

(*Vestia lycioides*)

This, as its name implies, is a somewhat malodorous shrub from Chile. With us it has never grown to much more than 3-4ft in height with an upright habit but the reference books state that it can achieve 6ft in the wild.

The glossy bright green leaves produce a very nasty smell if crushed so it is not a plant to position where you will brush past it regularly. The genus vestia is allied to cestrum and the real attraction of this peculiar plant is its flowers. These hang down from the shrub singly or in clusters from the leaf axils and are pale yellow and funnel shaped. Unusual and attractive despite their scent.

Vestia foetida is regarded by some as a greenhouse plant but the smell inside would give you a headache after a bit so plant it outside in full sun against a wall. After it happily survived The Beast here in March 2018 we believe it is actually perfectly frost hardy.

Light pruning in late summer after it finally finishes its lengthy flowering season from April to August will encourage fresh new growth and more flowers in the following year.

Fertile seeds in largish fruits appear in the autumn and can be sown in the cold frame then. However, like many plants with fuchsia like characteristics, this is an easy plant to grow from softwood cuttings if you hold your nose while you are doing it.



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