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Westringia rosmariniformis - Care Guide

Caring For Westringia Rosmariniformis

(W. fruiticosa)

Westringia are tender evergreen shrubs from Australia. W. rosmariniformis, as its name implies, is quite similar in appearance to a rosemary although, fairly obviously, rather more tender.

The plant has attractive whorls of foliage which consist of three to five leaves that are narrow but ovate and seem lighter green in more mature plants than in immature ones.

The flowers in our plants are normally white but, at Ventnor Botanic Garden, there are pale blue and mauve flowered forms which grow into 4-6ft tall shrubs. The tubular flowers have two lips; the top lip has two lobes and the bottom lip three. The flowers stand proud to the foliage in terminal clusters or singly from late spring to early autumn.

W. rosmariniformis can readily be used as a low hedge around a border in a similar manner to lavender and, if it is kept clipped back nearly after each flowering season, it will survive, frosts permitting, for about the same length of time as lavender.

Westringia can survive short spells of frost and cold wind but many plants will have perished in the recent ‘Beast’. Greenwood cuttings should therefore be taken in early summer or semi ripe wood in early autumn. Bottom heat will be needed to ensure that rooting takes place.

Under glass westringia should be grown in a loam based potting compost with plenty of grit or sand for good drainage. Water sparingly in winter. Outside they need a hot, dry, sunny location with protection from cold wind.

Even if you are lucky, and the plant survives a run of milder winters, it is a fairly short lived plant which soon gets sparse and leggy. At this stage pruning will probably kill it rather than encouraging new growth. So this is a plant to keep on the regular propagating list as it is attractive, has a long flowering season, and is popular with gardeners.



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