

Agapetes - Growing Guide

Growing Agapetes

Agapetes are frost tender but, the two which we grow, will easily withstand 0°C. Even so, they are clearly greenhouse plants or plants for growing outside only in the very mildest Cornish coastal locations.

Agapetes serpens is an initially erect but then arching shrub. As such it can readily be trained as a climber. It has small lance shaped leaves in opposite pairs all along its branches. The key reason for growing this north Indian plant from Nepal and Bhutan is its unusual and spectacular pendant flowers. They are bright red and urn shaped with 'v' shaped darker red markings. Around ¾in long they are produced in profusion all along the branch from the tip of the stem back to the start of last year's new growth. These normally appear with us in February or March but, in warmer greenhouse conditions, they can put on their show in December or January. The overall height of this plant when mature is around 3ft with a similar spread. With hanging flowers like this some supports for individual branches will clearly show the flowers off to full effect.

Agapetes 'Ludgvan Cross' is a hybrid between two species and named after a Cornish village near Penzance. This plant grows rather larger to 4-5ft with a similar spread. The leaves are rather larger too and the flowers appear later in the year in April or May. The flowers themselves are even more peculiar than *A. serpens* and twice the size. They are basically pink with dark crimson veining in lines across the tubes and a dark red calyx at the base of the flower. The flowers appear in clusters of up to six.

This plant can be grown from cuttings but is easily reproduced by layering into the soil or a sandy bed beside the plant. The soil used to pot these plants should be lime free ericaceous compost and they will need shading in the greenhouse. Water sparingly in winter until the flowers appear.



Agapeles 'Ludgvan Cross'



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