

Arum - Growing Guide

Growing Arum Italicum 'Marmoratum'

(*Pictum*)

Lords and ladies

These are fully hardy tuberous perennials which readily spread and naturalise themselves in a woodland garden context.

There is some confusion between the identity of Arum italicum 'Marmoratum' (often known as A. italicum 'Pictum') and the true Arum pictum. Both have glossy, leathery green leaves with attractive creamy white or cream veining. Sometimes these have naturalised amongst themselves in the wild or in our gardens and identifying the very variable leaves can often be difficult. The confusion in the naming of the two species is also obvious. However A. pictum produces blackish purple spathes (a hood-like bract 'flower') in the autumn while Arum italicum has pale greenish-white spathes in early summer.

Arum italicum does best in a shady, damp site in rich soils. After flowering and, as the leaves die off in the autumn, spikes of bright orange-red berries persist until the spring. These can be 6-12in tall. These are attractive in themselves in a border and allow the plant to spread its seeds around and about with the assistance of birds and small mammals.

A. italicum has mid green spear shaped leaves with some white veining. A. italicum 'Marmoratum' has rather more pale green or cream veining which is often not that pronounced in immature leaves as they emerge in the spring.

These plants can be propagated by digging and dividing mature clumps of tubers when dormant in winter or the seed can be sown in the autumn in a cold frame. The container used needs to be rodent proof and perhaps covered with a fine wire mesh.



Arum italicum



Arum italicum

Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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