

Cestrum - Growing Guide

Caring For Cestrum – Bastard Jasmine

Cestrum are native to Mexico, South America and the West Indies but the varieties which we offer are, with one exception (*C. nocturnum*), perfectly hardy outdoors in sheltered situations.

There has always been some confusion and debate about the ancient evergreen clump of cestrum which grows as a huge spreading clump of 10ft or more in height along the top wall at Caerhays. Opinions differ as to whether it is *C. elegans* or *C. fasciculatum*. Both species come from Mexico and both have tubular red flowers from summer to autumn followed by purple red berries. The leaves and flower clusters are said to be slightly smaller in *C. fasciculatum* and that is, at present, our conclusion.

These two species grow well in fertile well drained soil in partial or dappled shade. They can be pruned very lightly in spring or some of the outer shoots can be cut to ground level to allow the plant to show off its flowers from shoots of different heights. In a very cold winter some leaves may be lost with perhaps a little dieback from the tips but no other ill effects. *C. fasciculatum* 'Newellii' has tubular crimson flowers.

Cestrum parqui also makes a large upright deciduous shrub and is deciduous. Its common name is the 'willow leaved jasmine'. The leaves are lance shaped and mid-green. From summer to autumn it produces night scented bright yellow-green flowers with star shaped ends in large terminal cymes or clusters which can be up to 5in across and are followed by violet brown berries.

Cestrum x cultum 'Cretian Purple' is very much a Mediterranean garden plant and a bit more tender than the three species listed above. Its flowers are a smoky purple.

By far the bestselling cestrum in our catalogue is firmly a greenhouse plant and called *Cestrum nocturnum* or 'night jasmine'. It is reputed to have aphrodisiac properties which may well explain its popularity. Even in the greenhouse this evergreen plant may be cut back to ground level in winter but it will soon reshoot. It is a vigorous evergreen with spreading upright stems and produces panicles of pale green or ivory white flowers which are deliciously perfumed after dark. In the greenhouse this plant requires a loam based compost in full light but with some shading overhead and good ventilation. Water moderately in the growing season and give a liquid feed periodically.

Cestrum are most easily propagated from early season softwood cuttings for those species which are hardy outdoors and from semi-ripe cuttings later in the summer for more tender species.



Cestrum 'Cretan Purple'



Cestrum 'Cretan Purple'



Cestrum fasciculatum



Cestrum fasciculatum



Cestrum fasciculatum
'Newellii'



Cestrum fasciculatum
'Newellii'



Cestrum fasciculatum
'Newellii'



Cestrum nocturnum



Cestrum parqui

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