

## Cyclamen - Growing Guide

### Naturalising Cyclamen In The Garden

In around 1910 my great grandfather, J C Williams, purchased several hundred cyclamen tubers from Turkey and the Caucasus at the then staggering cost of nearly £1,000. Fortunately this gigantic expenditure still produces great returns over 100 years later. Caerhays has wonderful displays of huge clumps of cyclamen which flower both in spring and autumn in grassy banks. The cyclamen appear here and there away from the main clumps where ants have carried their seeds away to their nests. Some of the old tubers in the lawn are 10in in circumference and produce dozens of flowers on each. The same has happened in the Burncoose garden where the plants have naturalised widely in sun and in full shade on the drive.

Cyclamen coum has pink, white or carmine-red flowers in winter or early spring. Cyclamen hederifolium (C. neapolitanum) has pink flowers (occasionally white) in various shades which appear in early to mid autumn. At Burncoose, beside the lawn, they are usually in full flower by mid August making an early autumn show of great merit.

These two complementary flowering species should be planted initially in fertile well drained soil which has been cleared of ivy or other vegetation to reveal bare earth under a tree or shrub in partial shade. The tubers should be planted about 1-2in deep with the rooting side of the tuber (concave side) facing downwards and the shooting/flowering side of the tuber (convex side) facing upwards. A mulch of peat or leaf mould will help protect the plants after planting and to avoid them drying out in hot conditions.

These naturalising species of cyclamen have seeds heads on coils which develop above the corm after the flowers die down. These spring like coils

when ripe literally project the seed head and seeds onto the ground a few inches from the main tuber. That is why it is best to keep the ground clear and bare until the clump gets going.

The foliage of these two species is quite distinct. *C. coum* has deep green leaves with silver markings while *C. hederifolium* produces flowers long before its heart shaped and patterned dark green leaves appear.

You can collect ripe seed from both species and sow them straight away in a tray in the greenhouse with protection from sunlight initially. The whole point of these attractive plants is however to let them do this all themselves!



Cyclamen coum



Cyclamen coum



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen hederifolium



Cyclamen & snowdrops



Cyclamen & snowdrops



Cyclamen in a pot

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