

Erythrina - Growing Guide

Erythrina Care Guide

Growing *Erythrina crista-galli*
Commonly known as a 'Coral Tree'

Visitors to the Fox Rosehill Gardens in Falmouth and the main street in St Mawes are often amazed to see this Bolivian plant in full flower in September and October.

E. crista-galli has deep red pea like flowers in huge panicles of up to 2ft in length. The plant would normally grow as a tree but, in the UK, it is usually grown up or alongside a wall in full sun where its roots are baked in the heat.

Although this plant, once established, will survive -10°C of frost its growing cycle needs to be understood. Without heat the plant will die back over winter to a chubby bulbous base. The long prickly growth shoots die off in late autumn and need to be cut off completely in the spring. Each year the lush and vigorous new shoots appear afresh from the base quite late in the spring and often not until the weather warms up in May or early June.

You can readily grow this exceptional plant in the frost free greenhouse but, even here, it will probably die back to ground level. A heavy mulch indoors or out will help protect the roots and base of the stem. It is not unusual for an established plant to grow shoots of 10-12ft in length in a single season so it will need quite a bit of room in the greenhouse.

Softwood or semi ripened growth cuttings need bottom heat and winter protection to ensure they survive the winter.



Erythrina crista-galli



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Erythrina flabelliformis

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