

Eucomis - Growing Guide

Growing Eucomis

Commonly known as 'Pineapple Lily'

These are bulbous perennials from South Africa with extraordinary flower spikes in July and August. Each bulb produces a rosette of leaves and larger bulbs throw up stout stems of star like flowers in profusion. The top of the stem has a tuft of leaves or bracts similar to those of a pineapple.

Eucomis grow best in a sunny, sheltered border perhaps beside a hot wall or rockery. They will grow on their own in beds topped by gravel and make a nice contrast as they do in these pictures of *E. bicolor* and a few other crosses with other species of eucomis growing at Ventnor Botanic Gardens on the Isle of Wight.

In the nursery they all flower away in pots and therefore make good and peculiar greenhouse plants. *E. bicolor* has flowering stems 12-24in tall. *E. 'Sparkling Burgundy'* has attractive purple-red leaves and grows to much of the same height. *Eucomis zambesiaca 'White Dwarf'* has flower spikes about half this height and, as its name suggests, is likely to be more tender.

The bulbs need to be planted about 6in deep in the garden for frost protection but add mulch over winter anyway. In the greenhouse deep pots should be used and loam based potting compost with grit. Water sparingly in winter.

Eucomis can be grown from the seeds which usually set with us on plants grown in full sun. Sow in spring or autumn. However these bulbs will clump up so you can lift and remove the offsets when dormant in winter as an alternative and easier method of propagation.



Eucomis australis



Eucomis australis



Eucomis bicolor



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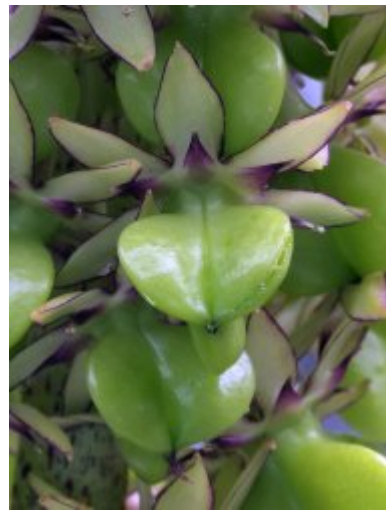
Eucomis bicolor



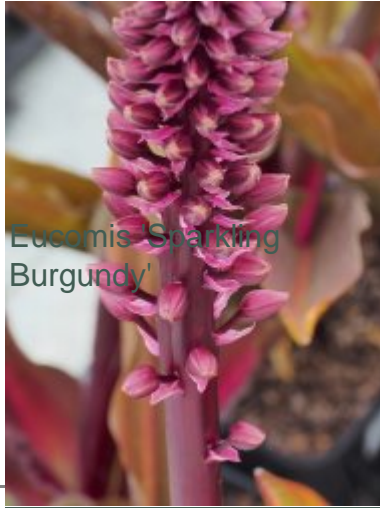
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