

Francoa sonchifolia - Care Guide

Caring For Francoa Sonchifolia

Bridal wreath

Francoa are evergreen perennials from shady rocky crevices in Chile. The best of their flowering is normally in late June or July and, as such, these plants are usually one of the standouts on many of the floral exhibits at Hampton Court Palace flower show in early July. They have wavy margined soft hairy leaves which are borne in rosettes with several small rounded lobes and one large terminal lobe. The leaves are 2-5in long and easily recognisable even in the winter months.

F. sonchifolia is totally hardy to -10° and its flowers are cultivated for use in flower arrangements and wedding posies or bouquets. These plants are often used to edge a herbaceous border and they perform excellently in planters or upraised beds in courtyards. Similarly, in colder areas of the country, they make good patio or greenhouse plants which can be brought indoors when out in flower.

F. sonchifolia has single unbranched stems each bearing a raceme of pink flowers with darker pink margins. The whole flower head opens from the bottom upwards but virtually all the flowers open at once. The flower stems are 2-3ft in height when mature and the clumps may well develop to be some 12-18in across with several flower stems.

These plants grow best in full sun or partial shade in a moist but well drained soil. They do not like boggy or waterlogged conditions which can cause the crowns or clumps to rot off.

Propagation is easiest by gentle lifting and manual division of the clumps in early spring. Seed can be sown in late spring once temperatures have warmed up.



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