

Fremontodendron Growing Guide

Growing Fremontodendron Californicum

Commonly known as 'Fremontia'

Fremontodendron californicum 'California Glory' is a common and much admired plant growing on sunny walls in many warmer UK gardens. It can however be an awkward plant to grow successfully and can be short lived in gardens if not tended properly.

In the wild in California it grows as a freestanding plant in dry woodland, canyons and mountain slopes. In UK gardens it is normally treated as a climber but it does need to be trained and tied into a trellis or frame on the wall. If grown as a freestanding plant at the back of the border it will definitely need staking to avoid it snapping and blowing over.

The large and showy yellow flowers are composed of five bracts. There are no petals as such. Fremontodendron have very hairy leaves especially on the new growth and these can cause a nasty rash or skin irritation if you do not wear gloves when touching this plant.

Flowering occurs over a long period through summer and into autumn which is one of the key attractions of this plant. It prefers poor acid to alkaline soil and must have its roots baked in the sun. Waterlogging or damp soil will cause the plant to wilt suddenly and collapse. We find this also in the nursery with plants in pots which we have overwatered.

Pruning is not essential but, if you are growing your plant against a wall, trimming it back in early autumn will encourage it to keep its shape and, more importantly, produce new growths next spring which will have more flowers.

Cuttings need to be taken when soft early in the summer to ensure the best chance of getting them to root in the mist bench with bottom heat. Harder new growth is, we find, a waste of time.

This is a fairly short lived plant which grows exponentially. Do not expect it to survive for more than perhaps 15 years without being replaced. It will have well earned its 'keep' in the meantime! The plants are particularly prone to mealy bug infestations which can often be a sign that your plant is near the end of its life.



Fremontodendron 'California Glory'



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Fremontodendron 'Pacific Sunset'



Fremontodendron 'Pacific Sunset'



Fremontodendron 'Pacific Sunset'



Fremontodendron 'Tequila Sunrise'

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