

## Lampranthus - Care Guide

### Caring For Lampranthus

#### *Perennial Mesembryanthemum*

Lampranthus are one of those plants which appear in most seaside or coastal gardens along the south coast of England. Although they are of South African origin, and therefore inevitably frost tender, even small pieces or cuttings can be rooted in a jam jar on the kitchen windowsill so it is extremely easy to take precautions against a cold winter. Nevertheless the plants which we grow are remarkably resilient, at least in Cornwall, and, apart from cold east winds, you would be fairly unlucky to lose them all even after brief frost periods of say  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . At Burncoose we overwinter our plants in an unheated greenhouse and I can never remember any real disasters over the last 35 years.

Lampranthus are spreading groundcover plants which are very happy in poor, dry, soils in full sun. Full sun is essential since the flowers mostly remain closed overnight and until the sun shines. They are entirely happy on top of dry stone faced earth banks or in crevices with soil in a wall or in a rockery. They will trail away and spread significantly, self-rooting as they go, to create dense carpets of colour in the summer months. Come to think of it, it is a strange occurrence in the nursery for there not to be a flower or two on the Lampranthus (even if the flower is not actually open) for most of the year. If you can only grow them indoors in colder parts of the country this is a significant benefit.

Lampranthus mix well with other hardier succulents such as Portulacea or Aeoniums. If you are using them as bedding plants, pull off a few self-rooted twigs and overwinter them inside the greenhouse.

These pictures show the array of colours that are on offer. Many of these were photographed at Ventnor Botanic Garden in the Isle of Wight where they are splendid. The yellow and orange flowering forms seem to be

scarcer in gardens and perhaps a little more tender.

## Pruning - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/B3ZONO-Gidw?rel=0>

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