

Leptinella 'Platts Black' - Growing Guide

Growing Leptinella 'Platts Black'

This is a most peculiar creeping or mat-forming perennial from near alpine regions in New Zealand. We have used Leptinella "Platt's Black" in several of our Chelsea Flower Show exhibits to try to demonstrate how effective this plant can be as low groundcover which can survive being trodden on. As such it is ideally suited to crevices and cracks in paving or in gravel gardens. It will grow well too as an attractive and unusual groundcover in a rockery although it may get a bit out of control in time and need containing or shaping.

This Leptinella has bronze-black foliage which will go jet black in full sun or greenish in full shade. Individual leaves are broadly elliptic in shape with fern-like characteristics albeit on a small scale. They are deeply divided with linear leaflets. Most attractive and unusual.

Perfectly hardy in our climate this plant will tolerate poorish soils but the chosen location needs to be well drained and not waterlogged in winter. If this happens the centre of the clump or tuft is inclined to rot away.

Flowering occurs in late spring or early summer and you have to be alert to spot it. The flowers are tiny and yellowish on small stalks. It took several years to manage to photograph these in the autumn and we have never tried collecting the seeds.

Leptinella are most easily propagated by simply gently pulling the clump apart to extract side shoots with roots. These can be potted in the greenhouse while they establish.

images still need adding



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