

Philesia - Growing Guide

Caring For Philesia Magellanica

This is a rare and much sought after plant from the forests of Chile which is related to lapageria and fully frost hardy.

It is a dwarfish, evergreen, suckering shrub which enjoys semi shade and moist peaty areas. It is slow to get going in cultivation but will eventually form a wide thicket of wiry stems which will climb over and through obstacles. We grow it around rocks in a shady, mossy rockery which remains damp through the summer.

The leaves are narrow and rigid; green above and glaucous (blue-white) underneath. They are around 1.5in long. Plantsmen grow this extraordinary plant for its spectacular flowers. These are trumpet shaped, waxy and about 2.5in long. Out of proportion really to the plant itself. The trumpets are a crimson pink and appear irregularly from mid summer on into autumn. When you suddenly stumble upon this plant in flower it quickly becomes a 'must have' plant even if it can be fussy about its location.

Suckers can be removed in spring but, as with lapagerias, we have found this difficult. Semi-ripe cuttings taken in summer are easier but not always successful. Deliberate layering of some of the shoots may well be a better bet.

Images to follow

