

Tropaeolum - Care Guide

Caring For Tropaeolum Speciosum

Commonly known as The Flame Creeper or Flame Nasturtium

This Chilean plant has an undeserved reputation for being difficult to grow. It however remains one of the most popular plants, year on year, in our mail order catalogue. We have seen it growing superbly well in the north of Scotland and Kent as well as in Cornwall so hardiness is not an issue.

Disasters can easily befall those who do not understand what this wonderful summer and early autumn flowering plant actually likes and needs.

T. speciosum is a climber which can grow up to 6ft or more each year before dying down each winter. Its roots are long thin fleshy white rhizomes which look remarkably like bindweed. Each piece of root can produce multiple shoots in early May which grow very quickly.

The key thing is that the roots of T. speciosum **MUST** be damp, moist and fully shaded at all times.

The plant needs support to climb up to its natural growing height and will not readily do this on canes or simple supports. What it needs is to grow through some other, preferably evergreen, shrub.

We find that camellias with well shaded roots, perhaps against a dampish wall in shade for most of the day, are perfect hosts for this plant to climb through. Yew hedges can be used similarly but any evergreen will do.



Tropaeolum ciliatum



Tropaeolum ciliatum



Tropaeolum 'Ken Aslett'

T. speciosum produces plenty of seeds which turn bright blue when ripe. The plant will self seed and expand quickly if it likes its home.

Alternatively sow the seeds in the spring in pots or a cold frame. Germination can be erratic. The seedlings scorch easily and need full protection from the sun. The plant can also readily be propagated as well from soft growth cuttings in summer or by lifting and dividing the fleshy rhizomes when still dormant in spring.



[collecting, storing and planting seeds](#) if you are interested in more details.

Tropaeolum Speciosum - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/DqZO187FZZY?si=tMSlsvpDY5y2A8sG>

Training Climbers - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/XfXsF7hdgLg?rel=0>

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