Xeronema - Growing Guide

Xeronema Growing Guide

Poor knight's lily

This plant originates as a native plant from a single island off the coast of North Island in New Zealand where it grows on volcanic rock on mountain sides. In cultivation it prefers semi shade in the greenhouse. They are frost tender and detest boggy conditions, so you need to grow them with plenty of grit in the compost and keep them well drained. Pot on regularly but not into a much larger pot.

The plants we will send you look tiny and iris-like in appearance with upright light green sword-like leaves. For the first two years after we split offsets off our stock plant, they do not get much bigger but begin to take off after that. They need shade protection in the greenhouse from scorching sun and enjoy high levels of humidity.

When the plants are four- or five-years old growth suddenly becomes faster, but it can be about 10 years before they are large and mature enough to flower. By then you will need to be growing them in a large pot. The flower stalks and flowers appear vertically at first and then bend sideways to reveal their bright red bottlebrush like flowers with bright orange pollen. By now the mother plant will have many offsets in the same pot and the sword-like foliage may now be 3ft tall.

So, this is a collector's plant which needs great patience and longevity to see perform properly but it is most definitely worth it!

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