

Cultural Details: **Alstroemeria**

Alstroemeria are marginally hardy (in the UK) perennials grown for their lily-like flowers which are produced prolifically and last well when cut. The well-known 'Ligtu Hybrids' produce flowers in a range of pinks, oranges, salmon-pinks and lilacs. The natural flowering season is June-September. The plants may be grown outdoors and in a cool greenhouse.

Sow seeds 1cm deep in March/April in a cold frame (60 seeds per gram). Once seedlings are large enough to handle, transfer into 10cm pots and grow on in the cold frame for the remainder of the season. Protect from frost and plant up into the flowering position in spring.

Choose a sheltered location with fertile, well drained soil which, however, should not dry out completely. Roots are very fragile and should be handled carefully at all stages of production.

Alternatively, establish in deep pots in cool greenhouse. New growth and flower stems should be supported with stakes or netting. In the first year, not many flowers will be produced but once established, the clump will tend to spread. Plants will reach a height of 1m. When growing Alstroemeria in greenhouses, keep as cool as possible in the summer as soil temperatures of 21°C and above inhibit initiation. In the autumn, once the leaves have withered, cut the stems back to ground level. Protect the plants from frost, except in the very mildest areas, with a suitable mulch.

Pests and diseases. Outdoors, slugs may become a problem. In the greenhouse, monitor for the presence of red spider mite and treat accordingly.

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.