

Cultural Details: **Lewisia**

Lewisia is a compact, rosette-forming rockery perennial which is sold in flower during May and June. It is a cold germinator, whose seed requires stratification to germinate.

Variety Selection

Coyledon Sunset Strain contains a wide range of colours, and the recently-introduced 'Little Peach' has white petals with peachy-yellow centres.

Programming the Crop

Sow seed in Autumn or Spring, for flowering the following year.

Propagation and Growing-on

To break the dormancy of the seed, place it in a freezer for around 10 days prior to sowing. Then sow the seeds (1,000 per gram) onto the surface of a free-draining, open, seed sowing compost, which should be thoroughly wetted with a suitable fungicide prior to sowing (to prevent damping-off diseases), and the trays allowed to drain. Sow into plug trays to prevent root disturbance, or into seed trays. Cover the seeds with a layer of vermiculite, and cover trays with clear or milky polythene to maintain humidity, until the first seedlings are visible. Germinate in a cool place, maximum 15°C – germination should commence in about 3 weeks from sowing, although it is a little erratic. Alternatively, sow the seeds in the Autumn, and leave in a cold frame – germination should be naturally broken over the Winter, and germination start in the Spring.

When the seedlings are large enough, prick out into a low nutrient, free-draining compost, into large-celled plug trays, then later once these are fully developed, into 9cm pots. The addition of sharp sand or grit to the compost can help the drainage, especially important when overwintering. Plants kept wet for long periods will die, so water carefully and sparingly, especially during the Winter.

Sell non-flowering plants as soon as the rosette has reached sufficient size, otherwise sell during the natural flowering time in May and June.

Pest and Disease

Keep slugs away from the plants, and monitor for signs of aphids, spraying as appropriate.

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