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Banksia

Tough and Tender Winter Colour



The magnificent **Banksias** are members of the Protea family related to Grevillea and Hakea. They were discovered and named after the great British botanist, Sir Joseph Banks, who first saw them lighting up the Australian bush near Botany Bay in April 1770. Since then 170 species have been discovered. All are exclusively native to Australia

They range from spreading groundcovers only 1 metre/3.3ft high to 30 metre/100ft giants. Most species grow in the 4-9m/13.2-30ft range.

Many Banksias are relatively dense and oval-shaped in habit, some are more upright, open and branching. These are bold and handsome evergreen shrubs and trees. Leaves are leathery, long and simple, often with prominent teeth.



Banksias thrive in dry, hot climates and many are semi-desert natives. They are quite adaptable to a variety of soils, even poor soils, preferring sandy land rich in leaf mould and with an acid soil pH. They have been found to naturalise in volcanic soil, gravel, loamy land and even heavy clay provided the site remains dry.

Banksias are hardy in extreme coastal sites right to the shore. They are often found on dry banks and hillsides, cliff tops and rocky terrain. Yet they are equally accommodating to the backyard garden provided they have good drainage.

While they will even tolerate positions that occasional become damp or wet, their root system often begins to rot or does not expand outwardly as it should. Thus in wet sites as the shrubs or trees develop and mature, their foliage

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