

{ CARE SHEET }



Growing Grevilleas...

Grevilleas do not need additional fertiliser. They belong to the great Proteaceae family of plants well known for their minimalist requirements. The ability of this family to survive and thrive in poor soils is derived from their proteoid roots. These roots have a larger absorptive surface than normal roots and are therefore more efficient at taking up nutrients; such as nitrogen and phosphorous and moisture from the soil.

Do not apply animal based fertilizer (eg chicken pellets) to your plant. If you are growing the plant in a pot or an area where it cannot obtain nutrients from soil use slow release fertilizers low in phosphorous and use these sparingly. Ask your local nurseryperson for advice on appropriate brands. Over-fertilizing grevilleas will kill them.

Grevilleas are drought tolerant once established. The plant should be watered in when planted and on a regular basis for several months or so. This period of establishment is important and is dependent on the weather; water more in hot or dry windy weather, less in winter or cooler, moist conditions. Mulch your plants for weed control and water retention. Thanks to their proteoid roots grevilleas can withstand periods of drought after they are established and actively growing but if given some water during prolonged dry periods it will certainly grow better.

Grevilleas need to be planted in a well drained position in full sun. If your soils remain water-logged after watering or rain you should consider raising the bed. On sloping ground plant them higher up the slope, not at or near the bottom where the water will continue to seep out over a longer period. Tropical brush grevilleas are sensitive to prolonged heavy frosts. You should provide protection if you live in an area subject to these conditions. Spider flowering grevilleas are generally tolerant to frosts.

Grevilleas are not affected by any significant pests and do not need to be sprayed with pesticides. Occasionally grubs will eat the leaves but the birds that flock to the flowers will appreciate the free feed. The stems and trunk of some grevilleas will develop dark patches as the plant grows. This is a natural part of the bark development of the plant and does not need to be treated. This is sometimes confused with sooty mould a problem associated with ants mealy bugs and scale insects. Sooty mould will rub off on your fingers, extend to the growing tips of the plant, the leaves and stems will have scale insects or mealy bug and ants will generally be seen running up and down the stems. Ask your nurseryperson for an appropriate treatment if you believe you have sooty mould but if it is only the dark patches on the stems and trunk don't waste your money on chemicals.

Grevilleas should be pruned at least once a year. This can be done at any time during the year but as a peak flowering time occurs from winter to spring a good time to prune is late spring or early summer. The branches can be cut back quite hard but cutting back by a third is recommended. Because many of the tropical brush grevilleas have some flowers most of the year you may have to cut off some flowers but the pruning is necessary. It will invigorate the plant to produce more flowers and develop a bushier specimen. Plants that are pruned yearly look healthy flower better and live longer.

Grevilleas are amongst the best plants to attract nectar feeding birds. Most of these birds are fairly small and you will find that by planting several grevilleas or other native plants together or planting your grevilleas near dense shrubs you will provide a safer environment for these delightful birds. Small birds need to be able to retreat to dense foliage if startled while feeding or drinking from your bird bath.

