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Seeds for Africa

Aristea

Aristea is wonderful plant for gardens in milder climates. Easy to propagate and cultivate; the plants are attractive throughout the year with evergreen leaves in neat clumps and intense blue flowers from October to November, followed by the attractive dry flower stems. Growing in the garden the plants require full sun to semi-shade and a rich soil that is well drained, but not too dry and sandy. During the winter and spring the plants require plenty of water. If one is planting an indigenous garden, this is an excellent plant to combine with restios, proteas and buchu for a fynbos look.

The best way to propagate Aristea is from seed. The seeds are formed inside quite large 3-winged capsules, which turn brown and dry as the seed matures. The seed capsule splits open at the top to release the ripe seeds that are light brown, hard and flat. The best time to sow is in autumn, which is the start of the rainy season in the Cape. The seeds are sown in seed trays filled with a well-drained potting soil. After sowing, the seeds are lightly covered with milled bark or white sand, watered well and placed in the shade. Germination is usually very good and within a month. The small seedlings can be potted and grown-on in a well-drained, rich medium. The young plants only start to flower after about 3 years. Mature plants can be transplanted and divided after flowering, but this should only be done if really necessary. Lift the clumps with care and make sure that the rhizomes do not dry out. The plants should not be out of the ground for long. Keep the ground moist till the plants are established.

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