

# Byblis

## The Rainbow Plant



*Byblis Gigantea* —Canning Vale, Western Australia

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the vibrations of its wings triggers the anthers to release pollen from small holes. In cultivation this can be replicated by using a tuning fork. Strike the tuning fork and then touch the anthers. Pollen will be sprayed over the petals, and this can be transferred to the female parts of the plant with a paintbrush or wooden cocktail stick. Seed will be ripe several months later and is best sown in early spring.

Watering should be done by the tray system with the pots standing in a few centimetres during the summer months. In winter the compost should be kept slightly moist.

The annual species should be grown in a compost of one part by volume sphagnum moss peat or coir to one part sand. Coir may be a potential alternative or part substitute to peat for Byblis, but as yet is unproven (see "Growing without Peat" Care Sheet). These are tropical species and are used to a long growing season. For this reason it's best to sow the seed very early in the year, though if germinated too early you can have problems with insufficient light levels. Sow in January—germination is very much effected by temperature and humidity. Fresh seed will germinate in a few weeks if kept above 25C and in 100% humidity. If kept at lower temperatures expect a longer germination time.

As the seedlings grow, acclimatise them to lower humidity and temperatures by gradually removing their cover. The seedlings are quite delicate and slow growing at first but once they reach a critical size they grow very fast. Aim to grow in the main area of a greenhouse or conservatory by May when warmer weather and strong sunlight can be expected.

Since these are annuals the only way to propagate is by seed which can be collected from your own plants. Pollination is not normally necessary but if necessary use fine paintbrush or wooden cocktail stick.

Watering should be by the tray system and all species need maximum sunlight.

For cultivation purposes Byblis can be split into two groups: perennial species and the annual species.

The two perennial species *B. gigantea* and *B. lamellata* should be grown in a compost of one part by volume of moss peat or coir to one part sand. The plants can grow quite tall and become untidy and it is advisable to prune them occasionally. When pruning, always cut back to an emerging bud on green wood. These two species seem very unwilling to produce new growth from woody material and can become quite tree-like after a few years.

Plants can be propagated from cuttings (use the semi-hard green material taken from pruning) or by seed. Cuttings are best taken in spring.

These species have an interesting means of releasing the pollen from their anthers. When a pollinating insect hovers over the flower



*Byblis liniflora*—Kingston Rest, Kimberley

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