

Crocosmia - Montbretia

These are cold hardy to zone 6; suitable to grow as a container plant in colder zones or lift bulbs and store in a cool, dry place overwinter.

Crocosmia are virtually pest and disease free. The butterflies and hummingbirds LOVE the stunning flowers which appear in the heat of mid-summer and last several weeks.

These plants are easy to care for, basically ignore them and let them grow. They will develop into nice and sturdy clumps with flower spikes that can reach up to 3 feet in length and can have up to 50 individual tubular flowers. They don't like wet feet - need well draining, sandy soil and full sun.

Crocosmia originate from South Africa. Some folks still refer to Crocosmia as Montbretia.

Planting Instructions:

1. Find a location where the soil drains well. If there are still water puddles 5-6 hours after a hard rain, scout out another site or amend the soil with the addition of organic material to raise the level 2"-3" to improve the drainage. Peat moss, compost, ground bark or decomposed manure all work well and are widely available. Crocosmia will not survive in soils that are water logged.

If you wish to plant your corms in containers, fill your containers with good quality, well-draining soil. Almost any commercially available potting medium will work fine. Make sure there are adequate drainage holes; crocosmia bulbs must never sit in waterlogged soil or they will rot.

2. Site your crocosmia where they will receive full sun.

3. Plant the bulbs (corms, actually) 2"-3" deep and 6"- 8" apart. Place them with the pointy end facing up – See photo to right for the correct orientation.

4a. If you are planting when temperatures are warm (no lower than 60°F at night) and RISING (ie: in the spring and summer), then water your crocosmia generously, soaking the soil. Roots and top growth will form within a few weeks.

4b. If you are planting when temperatures are colder than that and getting colder, DO NOT WATER your corms until temperatures warm up. If you are planting in the fall or winter, that may mean waiting until the spring. These corms are hardy to zone 6; if you live a zone colder than that, STORE YOUR CORMS in a cool, dry, dark place until spring, then set them out following these instructions. Even if you live in an area where this plant is hardy, if the ground is too frozen to plant, store your corms overwinter and plant them in the spring.

5. When in bloom, feel free to clip crocosmia stems for bouquets. This will not hurt the plants and will provide a steady supply of cut flower. Choose flower stalks with the bottom half of the blooms open, the remaining buds will open over a several day period.

6. After blooming has finished for the season leave the foliage in place; don't cut it off. The leaves will gather sunlight and provide nourishment for next year's show. Water as needed. Leaves may be removed when they yellow. (In cold areas, zone 5 or colder, to save your crocosmia for next year, dig the bulbs after the first frost. Let them air dry for several days. Then store in a cool location in paper bags or boxes filled with peat moss.)

7. Your crocosmia will rest for a few months before beginning the next growing cycle.

