

The Culture of Lofos

GROWING INSTRUCTIONS

The latin name for Lofos is *Lophospermum erubescens* but may be found listed as *Asarinia erubescens* or *Maurandya erubescens* in some gardening books. It originates from mountainous areas of Mexico where it grows at an altitude of around 2,000 metres. *Lophospermum* is a tender perennial plant suitable for growing in hanging baskets or against a wall or trellis where it will reach a height of up to 3m (10').

Care of the plants

Initially the plants should be potted into 7.5-9cm (3-3½") pots using a good quality, freely draining potting compost. If the plants are to be planted in the border use a 10cm (4") pot. Grow on in a greenhouse, conservatory or indoors at a minimum temperature of 15°C (60°F). In the early stages keep the plants on the dry side and ventilate the greenhouse whenever weather conditions allow as the young plants can be susceptible to the fungal disease *Botrytis*.

Pinch out the growing tip to produce a bushy habit when the plants have reached a height of about 10cm (4"). Transfer to hanging baskets when a good root system has been established, three plants will be sufficient for a 35cm (14") diameter basket. Once the plants are growing vigorously keep the compost moist and apply a balanced liquid feed at 10 day intervals.

The plants can be placed outdoors in partial shade or full sun during late May or early June after the danger of frost has passed. When grown in the border against a support, space the plants 60cm (24") apart in a well drained soil.

Mature plants can be over wintered in a greenhouse at a minimum temperature of 5°C (41°F). At these lower temperatures the plants may lose their leaves. Water sparingly during the winter months until growth recommences in spring.

