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## Justicia campylostemon | Plantz Africa

### Introduction

*Justicia campylostemon* is an attractive, dainty, evergreen shrub with creamy yellow, hooded flowers almost all year long, that does well in the shade.



### Description

### Description

*Justicia campylostemon* is a fast growing, multi-branched shrub up to 3 m that is naturally rounded, with upright, slender, herbaceous stems. Glossy, dark green, elliptical, opposite leaves with wavy margins are an attractive feature of this plant. Arising in the axils of the upper leaves are the delicate, spreading inflorescences. Due to their extended branching, they give the impression that the flowers are scattered all over the plant.

The dainty cream-coloured flowers have green or reddish maroon speckled markings in the throat and the upper part of the flower is hooded. Flowers occur throughout most of the year with the main show being from summer until late autumn (Dec.-May). The fruits are cylindrical capsules borne on a longish stalk.





## Conservation Status

### Status

*Justicia campylostemon* is not listed on the Interim Red Data list of South African Plants (October 2007).

## Distribution and habitat

### Distribution description

*Justicia campylostemon* occurs naturally in forest understorey and on forest margins from the Eastern Cape to KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Swaziland. It is tolerant of a wide range of rainfall and climatic temperatures.

## Derivation of name and historical aspects

### History

The genus *Justicia* is named in honour of James Justice, 1698-1763, a Scottish horticulturist. The species name *campylostemon* refers to the curved stamen, from the Greek words, *kampylo*, meaning bent or curved, and *stemon*, meaning stamens.

The family Acanthaceae comprises about 250 genera and 2500 species, of which 44 genera and 350 species occur in southern Africa. The genus *Justicia* contains ± 420 species, cosmopolitan in warm and tropical areas, with 23 species in southern Africa where they are widespread.

## Uses

### Use

*Justicia campylostemon* is not used as a medicinal plant, although some other African and Asian species are, such as: *J. flava*, the yellow justicia or *impela* (Zulu), used to treat coughs, stomach ache and diarrhoea; and *J. capensis*, the money plant or *ikhokhela* (Zulu), used as a charm to attract customers or a job.

Leaves are also rubbed on snares to mask the human scent.

## Growing Justicia campylostemon

## Grow

*Justicia campylostemon* is easy to grow and does best in damp shade. It will tolerate poor soil but will really look its best with regular watering and fertile, compost-enriched soil. It will also tolerate and thrive in full sun.



This shrub is an excellent filler in mixed beds, or can be used for backdrop plantings or massed together under trees. It does well in containers.



*Justicia campylostemon* can be grown from seed and cuttings although good results can be obtained much more quickly from cuttings. Take stem and tip cuttings at any time of the year. Place in a suitable rooting medium, treat with rooting hormone to increase successful rooting. Rooting will take 3 to 4 weeks, thereafter pot up to a suitable container and grow on.

## References

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## **Credits**

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