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## Pelargonium ionidiflorum | Plantz Africa

*Pelargonium ionidiflorum* (Eckl. & Zeyh.) Steud. Family: Geraniaceae Common names:

### Introduction

*Pelargonium ionidiflorum* provides beautiful violet pink flowers all year round to a garden.



### Description

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*Pelargonium ionidiflorum* is a small, woody shrublet, up to 0.5 m high. The stems are rough with leaf scars and are covered with a layer of greyish brown cork. The young stems are yellowish green and are always covered with glandular hairs. The beautiful light pink to dark violet pink flowers are produced all year round and have wine-red markings on the posterior petals.

### Conservation Status

#### Status

*Pelargonium ionidiflorum* is very common and therefore has no conservation status.

### Distribution and habitat

#### Distribution description

*Pelargonium ionidiflorum* has a restricted distribution range. It is found only in the Eastern Cape where it

occurs in the districts of Craddock, Somerset East, Fort Beaufort and Grahamstown. It grows among rocks in karoo or karroid vegetation which is typical of Eastern Cape Valley Bushveld. The habitat receives an annual rainfall of 300 to 750 mm per annum during summer. The summer months in the area also experience very high temperatures and the winter months reach below 0°C.

## Derivation of name and historical aspects

### History

The genus *Pelargonium* derives its name from the resemblance of the shape of the fruit to the beak of a stork, *pelargos* in Greek. The species name *ionidiflorum*, is derived from the Greek word, *ion*, which means violet colour, and the Latin word *florum*, meaning flower, and refers to the colour of the flower.

The genus *Pelargonium* belongs to the family Geraniaceae, a large family of 11 genera and 800 species in the subtropical and tropical world. *Pelargonium* occurs in S, E and NE Africa, Australia, Madagascar, Tristan da Cunha, New Zealand, St Helena and Asia. There are 219 of the 270 species in southern Africa.

### Ecology

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The seeds of pelargoniums are quite interesting in that, attached to the elliptically shaped seed, is a feathered, tail-like structure that is coiled in a spiral. The tail allows the seed to drill and secure itself in the soil if twisted around by the wind or by the movement of animals.

### Uses

### Use

No cultural uses have been recorded. *Pelargonium ionidiflorum* is ideal for any garden that has constant dry soils. The plant will be well suited for an area that experiences temperature extremes between summer and winter. It can be planted among smaller herbaceous border plants in a garden bed. It is also suited for container gardening and flower boxes. It is also pretty for rockeries and the plant requires direct sunlight.





## Growing Pelargonium ionidiflorum

### Grow

This plant species is easy to grow from cuttings. Cuttings can be taken during any time of the year. Stem cuttings of about 100-150 mm long should be taken and a rooting hormone applied, to stimulate the rooting process. The cuttings should be rooted in a cold frame, in a well-drained medium such as coarse river sand. Rooting will take place within four weeks. Once rooted, the cuttings should be potted in a well-drained potting soil. The rooted cuttings should be given an organic liquid fertilizer on a monthly basis or be fed with an organic-based pellet fertilizer.

Sow the seed in a well-drained potting soil. Broadcast the seeds evenly in the seed tray, covering them with a layer of clean, white sand or fine milled pine bark. The depth of sowing is usually one-and-a-half times the size of the seed. Water thoroughly but gently and provide light shade. Germination usually takes place within three weeks. Pelargoniums grown from seed are generally more vigorous than those grown from cuttings; however, they take longer to flower. *Pelargonium ionidiflorum* does not require a lot of maintenance and will be a pleasure to have in any garden.

### References

- Van der Walt, J.J.& Vorster, P.J. 1981. Pelargoniums of southern Africa, vol. 2. Juta, Cape Town.

### Credits

**Trevor Adams**

**Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens**

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