



# GROWING *climbers* IN PERTH

## How to Grow Wisteria in Perth

Wisteria is a very popular ornamental climber, which is covered in glorious racemes of scented flowers in spring. The most commonly grown vines are Chinese Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*) or Japanese Wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*). These are all deciduous and grow vigorously in spring/summer. Wisteria needs a strong support and provides excellent summer shade when grown over a patio or pergola.

Flowers can be white, pink, lilac, mauve or deep purple, depending on the variety. The length of the flower also varies with some forms about 50cm long. Grafted varieties will usually flower in 2 – 3 years. Plants grown from seed can take up to ten years to produce flowers.

The foliage provides autumn colour as it turns and the bare branches can be an attractive feature in winter. Wisterias are legumes and produce pealike pods that hang from the branches in winter.

### **Position and Soil**

Wisteria is a very hardy and enjoys a full sun position. Branches will bloom better when they benefit from warmth from sunlight or a wall location. It will cope with a range of soil conditions from sand through to heavier soil.

### **Watering**

Once established, wisterias are very drought tolerant and will survive on regular weekly watering. For the first few summers, they may need supplementary watering in prolonged dry hot spells.

### **Fertilising**

Kickstart the flowering process with weekly applications of a fertiliser high in potash from August through to February. Avoid applying too much nitrogen as this can encourage lots of leaf production and very few flowers.

### **Pruning**

The most common cause of poor flowering is incorrect pruning. It is important to prune at the end of flowering when the racemes have withered. Cut the new growth back to two leaves on each branch and avoid pruning off next year's flowers. This pruning will form the main framework of the plant structure. A second prune can be done in autumn to thin out any old branches and further shape the plant.

### **Native Wisteria**

There is an evergreen climber referred to as Native Wisteria, which is actually Hardenbergia. It is another vigorous climber and produces masses of attractive flowers in white, mauve and deep purple. It enjoys a full sun position, grows in a variety of soils and can be used as a ground cover or a climber.

*General advice only. Please ask one of our Horticulturists if you require specific advice for your situation.*