

Plant of the Month

May
2019

Common Name: Brazilian Red Cloak
Scientific Name: *Megaskepasma erythrochlamys* Lindau
Family: Acanthaceae
Genus: Greek *Mega* – large, *skepasma* – covering, refers to the bracts that enclose the flowers.
Species epithet: Latin. erythro - red, chlamys - cloak

Distribution

Native to Venezuela and occurs naturally in Nicaragua, Panama and Suriname. Introduced to Costa Rica, Hawaii and Trinidad-Tobago.

Native Habitat

Rainforest understorey.

Description

An attractive multi-branched, woody shrub to 3 metres. Striking crimson spikes, comprising bracts enclosing white flowers appear in late autumn. Leaves are glossy, ovate-elliptic to 50 cm long with prominent venation.

Flowers and Fruit

Conspicuous crimson bracts surround white flowers with two-lipped corollas. The lower lip is recurved and twisted and the upper erect and hooded. Fruit is a four-seeded oblong capsule.

Location in Garden

Conservatorium of Music and Palace Garden.
To find additional locations and other plants in our garden, use our new Garden Explorer plant finder at:
<https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/Visit/Garden-Explorer>

Information

This is the only species in the genus *Megaskepasma* (monotypic). However, it belongs to a large family, Acanthaceae consisting of more than 200 genera and 3000 species of mostly tropical herbs, shrubs and vines. Explore more ornamental examples of this family in our Acanthaceae garden next to the Succulent Garden.

Hardy in frost free areas, this attractive shrub is perfect for creating a tropical look to the garden. Grows in full sun with protection from westerly afternoon sun and winds appreciated. Will also grow in semi-shaded areas even with heavy root competition, but flowering is best with a sunny aspect. They appreciate a free draining soil enriched with organic material and regular water. The striking crimson bracts and white flowers bring a welcome splash of colour to the late autumn garden and the bracts persist into early winter.

This is one of the unique plants propagated by volunteers from our living collection for sale to the public at our Growing Friends Nursery. The nursery is located next to our Foundation and Friends office and is open Monday to Friday 11am – 2pm and Saturday 10am – 2 pm.



  
#RBGSydney


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