

Botanical Name: Cistus villosus (C. incanus)

Common Name: Orchid Rockrose

Type of Plant: dicot: shrub Character evergreen

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape a low, fairly wide-spreading plant, with many slender stems forming a loosely rounded shape when young -- becomes more dense and mounded with age

Height 2-3' (4') Spread equal or more Growth Rate moderate

Environment:

Exposure outdoors requires full sun at coastal locations; can tolerate shade

Soil prefers dry, well-draining habitats; avoid wet clay soils

Hardiness hardy (zones 11-24); best in sunny dry locales

Morphology:

Leaves pinnate, opposite (on thin stems), narrowly elliptic-oblong; rather boat-shaped, dark green above, paler beneath, with wavy margins

Flowers rose-orchid to lavender, large and showy, with 5 papery petals--each having a deep red-maroon spot at the base, numerous stamens

Fruit a small papery capsule

Propagation: seed or softwood cuttings

Usage: a highly valued filler for hot dry landscapes, producing a profusion of flowers; excellent in mass-plantings on slopes, raised planters, etc. where tolerance of heat is needed; mixes well with CA native species

Landscape Care:

Watering an infrequent deep-soak irrigation during 1st year; needs very little water after establishment

Fertilizing little needed

Pruning selectively head back after blooming; leggy if overwatered

Pests/Diseases relatively free - root rot in poorly drained locations

Special Conditions requires full sun for best flowering

Origin: So. Europe Family: Cistaceae