

Botanical Name: Odontonema strictum

Common Name: Cardinal's guard

Type of Plant: dicot: shrub Family Acanthaceae

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape Upright, rangy, shrubby perennial forming an overall rounded shape, becoming dense with age

Height to 8 ft. Spread to 8 ft. Growth Rate moderate

Environment:

Exposure outdoors partial shade to full sun near the coast

Soil prefers a rich, moist, well-amended soil

Hardiness Tender - Zones 23 and 24, otherwise indoors

Morphology:

Leaves oblong to elliptical, to 6" long, oppositely arranged, margins often undulate

Flowers terminal spikes of small scarlet tubular flowers each about 1 inch long; flowers appear in late spring to summer

Fruit small capsule

Propagation: easily rooted from stem cuttings

Usage: tropical specimen, large scale filler or background plant in tropical landscapes; can also be used as a large scale hedge; intensely colored blooms are good in arrangements

Landscape Care:

Watering needs regular watering, not drought tolerant

Fertilizing balanced fertilizer two to three times yearly

Pruning can be headed hard after danger of frost has passed

Pests/Diseases scale, thrips, mealybug

Other pinch back regularly to induce bushiness

Origin: Central America