

The Archibald Archive – Genus Guides

CYCLAMEN

We list the current year's seed from an outstanding range of the wild *Cyclamen* species, all cultivated by us and other specialists, usually from parent-stocks with field data. We also offer fresh seed from many flower & leaf variations, selected in cultivation. We work closely with several of the leading European growers of *Cyclamen* species and list cultivated seed from plants maintained from original wild collections made by such specialists as David Hoskins, Bob and Rannveig Wallis, Peter and Penny Watt, Ronald and Erna Frank, Melvyn Jope and Manfred Koenen, as well as from garden-selections made by Phil Cornish and Peter Moore.

Few genera inspire such devotion among gardeners as *Cyclamen*, a small genus of summer-dormant tuberous species in Primulaceae with almost 20 species, distributed from southern Europe and northern Africa eastwards to northern Iran. Their flowers & beautiful foliage can be enjoyed almost throughout the year, though, of course, their peak seasons for flowering are spring & autumn. *C. hederifolium*, *C. coum* and a few others are reliable garden-plants in much of Europe and North America but the majority can be grown to perfection, in the UK, only under glass, safest kept frost-free. All, including *C. africanum* and *C. rohlfsianum*, will take very brief periods of light frost but some measure to prevent prolonged or severe freezing is only common-sense. Likewise, protection from extremely high summer temperatures by shading & preventing dehydration when dormant is sensible also. Growing them from seed is the only satisfactory method of propagation. Sowing seed straight from the capsule is a counsel of perfection. Reasonably fresh seed is perfectly satisfactory. They germinate at low-temperatures and are best sown in late summer or autumn. Soaking seed in hot, not boiling, water & leaving for 24 hours at room-temperature before sowing appears to aid germination. Always keep pots of ungerminated seed, which will usually appear in time, and guard against mice, which love them as much as gardeners do.

Nomenclature: The best references are C. Grey-Wilson's monographs, 'The Genus *Cyclamen*' (1988 onwards). Names in these largely follow 'Flora Europaea' and 'Flora of Turkey'. Chris describes a few new minor taxa every time a new edition is published but the species are quite well defined so there is not much argument about names.

Further information: There is nothing better than the C. Grey-Wilson publications.