

Junipers in the Subtropics

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INTRODUCTION

Junipers provide a wide range of colour all year round. In a variety of shapes and sizes, there is a species of juniper to provide feature plants, screen and wind breaks, ground covers, and tub specimens. Junipers are extremely hardy, tolerating temperatures ranging from -10 to 50C. They will tolerate long periods of drought and very wet conditions, provided drainage is good. Best of all, junipers are easy to propagate.

METHODS

Cuttings are taken practically all year round depending upon availability of material. Size ranges from 5 to 14 cm. These are placed in a steam-sterilised mix of 9 perlite : 1 peatmoss (v/v) in flat trays. Horizontal forms are multi-planted into 6.5-cm tubes. All cuttings are placed out in the full sun under constant mist. The mist runs for 15 sec at 10-min intervals during summer and 12 sec at 15-min intervals during winter. The mist is left on continuously from 7 AM to 4:30 PM in summer and from 8 AM to 4 PM during winter.

No hormonal powders are used. Percentage strike rate is generally from 70% to 90%, and quite frequently 100%. It takes approximately 12 weeks for the first roots to appear. A further 6 to 8 weeks gives a solid mass of roots and the cuttings are then ready to be removed from the mist. They are then hardened off for a few weeks prior to tubing.

CLIMATIC COMPARISON

We are situated at D'Aguilar, approximately 20 km inland from Caboolture, 50 km from the coast and 150 m above sea level. Winter temperatures range from 5C to 18C, occasional frosts are experienced. Summer temperatures are usually 18C to 35C or higher.