

Streptocarpus

Also called cape primrose
(*Streptocarpus species*)

Streptocarpus sends up flower-covered stems from the centers of fleshy-leaved rosettes. Each plant produces dozens of flowers under ideal conditions. A biennial, streptocarpus usually performs best in its second year of growth.

Light

Place in high light (full sun) in midwinter and medium (bright) light rest of year.

Water

Allow soil surface to dry out slightly between thorough waterings. Water less during winter rest period. Raise humidity by setting pot on tray filled with moist pebbles.

Temperature

Maintain temperatures of 55 to 60 degrees, if possible. Tolerates average temperatures if kept constantly moist. Keep temperatures in low 50s during winter dormancy.

Comments

Use shallow pots since roots are short. Use a growing medium that is half peat. Feed every 14 days during active growth. Because leaves break easily, place plant out of traffic. Plant goes through several months of dormancy each year after flowering. Cut back old growth at this time. Barely water and stop feeding. To break dormancy, start to water more freely. Water and feed normally once new growth emerges. Propagate by leaf cuttings (use wedges as with rex begonia), seed (start one year before expected bloom), or crown division (divide during dormancy).