

## Emerald Goddess Gardens

[emeraldgoddessgardens.com](http://emeraldgoddessgardens.com)

Botanical Name	Hamelia patens
Common Name	Firebush
Mature Size	6'x6'
Bloom Color	Orange Red
Bloom Period	Late Spring to Fall
Boom Form	Trumpet Shaped Cluster
Water	Moderate
Light	Full Sun
USDA Zone	8B & South
Fragrance	None
Uses	Boundary, Border, Specimen, Lg Potted Feature
Special Features	Attracts Hummingbirds



***Hamelia patens, or Firebush*** is a large growing semi-tropical shrub that is native to Central and South America and several subtropical zones of the United States.

Sometimes when you say 'native', a lot of gardeners will turn up their nose and think 'weed', even though 'native' is very much the politically, and environmentally correct thing to plant through presently, and many local governments have adopted requirements that at least a portion of all new installations be native.

***Firebush*** is a grand exception to the 'weedy' reputation that many natives have. It grows lush and full and is always nearly covered with bright scarlet orange/yellow tubular flowers that hummingbirds and butterflies cannot resist. Other birds enjoy the berry that follows the flower. It is a great plant for any area where you like to draw in the wildlife, as many critters find the flowers and the berry irresistible.

In the tropical south, firebush is an evergreen, and will reach heights of more than 15 ft. tall. Elsewhere in more temperate climates, it is grown as an annual and only gets about 2 ft. tall. The leaves will turn deep bronze red in the fall. In Zones 8 & 9 it dies back to ground in the winter and resprouts in the spring. North of Zone 8 it should be pot grown and wintered over indoors.

Firebush will grow in a wide range of soil conditions and does not require much care. It needs irrigation until it becomes established, but then is quite drought tolerant. It does best in full sun, but will tolerate the shade, just taking on a more leggy open habit and produces fewer blooms.

It makes a great border, background or screen plantings in mass, or is a great stand alone accent, or makes a knock out patio tree.

Indians in the tropics are said to have used the berry for various medicinal uses such as antibiotics and modern researchers are now investigating it for other treatments. A word of caution however, individual sensitivity and tolerance to plants can vary widely. We recommend you always treat all ornamental plants as toxic unless you have done your own research to determine they are safe and edible.

Direct planting of 4 inch starter size plants is not generally recommended, so for the best results, repot your new plant and allow it to grow for several weeks until the new pot is filled with roots before setting out into the landscape:

Please email with any growing or planting questions you might have to [emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com](mailto:emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com)

## Care of Your New Plant

Here are a few basic guidelines for handling and caring for your new plant:

Direct planting of 4 inch starter size plants or plugs directly into the landscape is not recommended, with a few exceptions. So, for the best results with your new plant we suggest that it be repotted into a larger pot and allowed to grow larger until the new pot is filled with roots before setting out.

Check the recommended USDA Zone Range for the plant. Many gardeners are able to successfully grow plants outside their recommended Zones, but this is dependent upon providing the type of environment and care the plant needs.

- Immediately repot the new plant into a 6 inch to 10 inch diameter pot (a 6 inch pot is the recommended size for starter plugs) that can drain easily and thoroughly.
- Use a good quality commercial potting media.
- Apply a high quality, slow release plant food according to the label directions. Do not use hot, all chemical fertilizers like 6-6-6 or 10-10-10.
- Locate so that the plant can receive direct, full spectrum light for several hours daily, but is protected from hot, direct afternoon sun.
- Maintain consistent and uniform moisture in the soil. Take care not to over water.
- Packing crystals may be reused to conserve water, but do so with caution as they hold 6000 times their weight in water.
- If reusing the crystals, mix and incorporate them thoroughly throughout the potting media.
- Be sure the pot can drain and that the bottom of the pot does not sit submerged in water for more than a few hours.
- Supplement feed with a water soluble plant food every 2-3 weeks according to the label directions.
- Prune or pinch lightly and often when the plant is young and actively growing to strengthen the central stalk and encourage branching and build uniform shape.
- Monitor for signs of disease or insects and treat accordingly.
- Protect from frost and freeze, as even cold tolerant plants can be damaged by cold, and tropicals will perform better, flower earlier, and live longer within their Zone Range when protected from cold temperatures.

Many tropical and subtropical plants can be grown as potted plants indefinitely, and can be successfully wintered over indoors in colder climates, so long as they are moved indoors well ahead of temps into the 30°F's, are maintained in warm environment (minimum 40°F) with adequate, full spectrum light, consistent soil moisture is maintained, and any pest or disease issue are promptly and properly addressed.

For quick answers to any growing or planting questions, just email us at [emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com](mailto:emeraldgoddessgardens@gmail.com).

You can check you USDA Zone by visiting our website at [emeraldgoddessgardens.com](http://emeraldgoddessgardens.com)

*Ornamental Plants sold by Emerald Goddess Gardens are intended for use as ornamental decorative items only. Emerald Goddess Gardens does not recommend or endorse any other use.*