



The fabulous flowers of Protea Blushing Bride look even more spectacular when seen on a tub specimen placed in a prominent position.



Nursery person, Graeme Bent prunes a range of Proteas.

PROTEAS continued from P9

bed with at least one and a half feet (45cm) of light soil instead. Another option is to use tubs (See box for details) which means you can make the most of the bush when it's in flower. Container grown plants will need more watering while those in the ground won't need much water after the first twelve months. Don't fertilise plants in the ground and be very sparing with those in tubs. (Use a fertiliser with a low phosphorous content. Half strength Maxicrop would be ideal.) As far as pruning goes, cutting flowers is your main method, and if you leave the flowers on the bush then the spent blooms must be removed with their stems, as this will help shape the bush and encourage more flowers next year."

PROTEAS IN TUBS

If your Protea is growing in a tub, you've not only solved any potential drainage problems, but you can put it on display when it's putting on its show. Two varieties recommended for tub growing are the King Protea (*Protea cynaroides*) which grows to around 1.5 metres and produces up to 15 huge flowers each year, and the Blushing Bride which is smaller and more dainty when in Spring it covers itself in small cream flowers flushed with pink.

Whichever variety you decide to grow, if you plan to grow it in a container, follow these steps for the happiest of plants.

- * Use a good quality potting mix suitable for Proteas. (Fertilisers in the potting mix should have low phosphorous levels.) Both the Debco and The Greenery brands are fine.

- * Use fertilisers sparingly and be sure they have very low phosphorus contents. Half strength Maxicrop is ideal.

- * Keep the container well watered.

- * Put the container in full sun, though late afternoon shade is acceptable.

- * And be sure the tub is 300mm (12") in diameter or larger. ●

~ The Best Proteas In Town ~

Pink Ice

Hardy Shrub with pink long-lasting flowers in Autumn and Spring.

King (*Protea cynaroides*)

Large pink flowers. Ideal as a tub specimen.

Shady Lady

A hardy Waratah shrub which grows to three metres. Semi shade or full sun.

Silvan Red

Good show of red flowers in Autumn on a shrub which will grow to two metres.

Calypso

This two metre high shrub has a rounded shape which comes ablaze with flowers in Spring.

Blushing Bride

Dainty cream flowers streaked with pink. ideal for a tub and flowers in Springs