



*Exotic
Tropical
Plants*

<http://stores.ebay.com.au/exotictropicalplants>

<http://members.iinet.net.au/~meckms/>

Heliconia wagneriana 'Rainbow' also known as 'Blush'

Description

Heliconia wagneriana is a medium sized erect heliconia, about 6-8 feet tall. It has beautiful pale yellow bracts with bright pink cheeks and a thin green and yellow border. It grows well in shade to partial shade, but can take full sun.

Blooming July to December, in warmer areas it may bloom intermittently throughout the year. An excellent cut flower, it has a vase life of 7-10 days, much longer on the plant.

Heliconia Wagneriana seems to be rather tolerant to cool weather and grow well in subtropical conditions. It has some cold tolerance.

At a glance:

Suitable for Zones: 9 - 12 (see the Zone Hardiness map page in my eBay store) – root hardy down to Zone 8 if rhizome is protected from freezing

Sun requirements: Full Sun to part shade (up to 50% shade)

Flowering times: July to December, almost year round in warmer areas.

Moisture requirements: Moderate to high

Size when fully grown: 6-8 feet - will grow taller in the shade

Reasonably frost tolerant

Cultivation

Heliconias are adapted to full or part sun. Height will tend to increase if the plant is subjected to shade.

Their requirements are simple: fertile well drained soil, warm humid temperatures and adequate water. They do not like frosts.

All of the eastern coast of Queensland, northern stretches of New South Wales, and most areas of humid Northern Territory and Western Australia are perfect for heliconia growing – the only requirements is selection of the right cultivars.

Heavy mulching is recommended to protect the soil from drying out, and to enhance the soil organic matter. In areas where rainfall is low, additional irrigation is important.

Fertilisers used by home gardeners are generally chicken pellets, although complete fertilizer blends are ideal. The only significant pests for gardeners are grasshoppers, scale and mealybugs. Diseases are rare but wet feet, especially in winter, can rot the root system.

The 'stem' is actually made up of rolled leaf bases and the flowers emerge from the top of these pseudostems. Pruning is therefore not advised. Each pseudostem will only flower once, so after flowering it is best to cut that pseudostem out.

Planting instructions

Please plant as soon as possible after you receive the rhizome.

The rhizome should still have growing 'buds' or new shoots as well as the leaf stem.

The rhizome should be planted with the top (leaf stem/new shoots/buds pointing upwards) no more than 3-4 cm under the soil. New shoots or larger buds should be above the soil. You can often look at the rhizome and see where the soil line had been while it was growing.

It is very important not to plant the rhizome too deep, as this will invite fungi and cause root rot. Freshly planted rhizomes need oxygen to grow new roots and will die if the planting medium is too dense or too wet.

After planting, water thoroughly, then do not water again until soil is getting dry. Keep evenly moist, but not wet, when shoots to grow and leaves start to unfold.

If planted in pots, these should be of sufficient size - at least 10 to 15 cm wider than rhizome size. Keep the pots in a warm, sunny place. When leaves start to unfold the plants can be planted out - again in well drained soil.

A slow release fertilizer is ideal in the beginning. Larger and already established plants require more fertilizing and more water.

