



SARATOGA HORTICULTURAL FOUNDATION, INC.

15185 Murphy Avenue
San Martin, CA 95046
(408) 779-3303

Correa 'Ivory Bells'

This hybrid Australian Fuchsia is a relatively small compact, evergreen shrub with an erect branching habit. It has felted, blue-grey leaves which make it into an attractive plant even when it is not in flower. The flowering season occurs during the winter months although it usually carries a few flowers throughout the year.

The genus Correa is endemic to Australia and consists of eleven species; these rarely overlap in the wild but in cultivation where they are grown in close proximity they hybridise freely. C. 'Ivory Bells' is the result of such an occurrence in the garden of Victor Reiter Jr. in San Francisco. In the 1940s he crossed a particularly low growing, fairly compact form of C. alba with a plant of C. backhousiana; from this crossing one seedling plant was selected and in due course a second generation of self sown seedlings from apparently selfed seed of this plant was produced, and the plant we now call C. 'Ivory Bells' was selected from the resultant population.

This shrub develops into a dense, compact, upright branching plant which will attain a height of three to four feet and achieve a similar spread in about three years or so (depending on irrigation practices).

The flowers of 'Ivory Bells' are about one inch long and are broader than the other commonly encountered Correas. The individual flowers are similar to those of C. alba and are white with a tan veneer caused by a sparse felt of hairs on the outer surface of the petals, inside the flowers are an ivory white which is enhanced by the purple of the anthers as the flower matures. The ends of the four petals making up the inflorescence tube are partially reflexed for a 1/4 inch or so, giving a somewhat star shaped appearance to the flowers. The flowers are produced in the axils of the leaves along the length of the current season's growth.

Flowering occurs over an extremely long season from fall right through the winter period. During a mild spell it may become intense, although the flowers are sometimes half obscured by the foliage. The flowers are attractive to Hummingbirds and provide a resource for them when other foods are scarce.

The undulate leaves are broadly ovate or elliptic and more or less an inch long by 3/4 inch wide. In colour

they are a dull, dark green with a blue cast to their upper surface and on the underside have a pale felted look; the whole leaf, at least in its young state, is overlaid with a sparse felt of tan hairs which produces an unusual and interesting effect.

The young stems are also densely felted with tan hairs and these impart a rough feel to the plant.

In common with the great majority of Australian Fuchsias C. 'Ivory Bells' is a drought tolerant plant and will withstand exposure to full sun and hot, arid conditions; however it is also tolerant of summer irrigation and heavy soil conditions, if the soil is well drained. It thus becomes a very versatile plant in terms of landscape use because of this ability to thrive in a wide variety of sites and conditions. Because of its hairy texture it will do better under a drip or low level irrigation system, overhead irrigation will reduce the intensity of the grey effect and, at the extreme, may cause scorch or leaf spots.

Both of the parent species, involved in the production of this hybrid, have a southerly distribution in Australia and both of them are relatively hardy; this offspring is no exception and will withstand cold temperatures down to at least 20 F

'Ivory Bells' is not susceptible to any particular insect problem and usually remains remarkably clean throughout the season. It does not generally suffer from any fungal leaf diseases and is extremely tolerant of the soil borne water mould fungi.

The Foundation obtained propagating material in 1974 from the Victor Reiter garden. A specimen was exhibited at the California Horticultural Society by SHF in 1975, when it received an Award of Merit.

Correa 'Ivory Bells' was introduced commercially by SHF in 1979.

Shrub; low-growing; evergreen; flowering; (low water use); hummingbird plant.