

Plant Ideas

After trialling more than 30 different varieties of Restios for growth, hardiness and performance many years ago when we first introduced them to the world of horticulture in the UK – we are today still advocates of 12 varieties. These 12 have survived several harsh winters and temperatures down to – 8°C/–10°C here at Trevena Cross. They are the hardiest of all, and as such, we have them available for sale at the garden centre.

- Calopsis paniculata
- Elegia capensis
- Elegia elephantinum
- Elegia equisetaceae
- Elegia filicea
- Elegia mucronata
- Elegia tectorum
- Ischyrolepis subverticillata
- Rhodocoma capensis
- Rhodocoma gigantea
- Thamnochortus bachmanii
- Thamnochortus rigidus

Our selection of Restios range in height from around 70cm right up to 3m tall, so there's a suitable variety for every garden, whether planted in an impressive group/drift or as individual accent plants to catch the eye. Smaller varieties can look superb in pots as statement pieces.

Further Information

Please note that this information is only intended as a guide – put together from our knowledge and experience.

It should be noted, that on occasion, a plant can thrive in one situation but struggle under almost identical conditions. Like us, plants are living individuals – all different and unique. They should therefore be treated as such.

One of the best bits of advice we can give you however, is to have a look at your neighbour's garden and see what they are growing. Armed with this information and the ideas included here, you should be able to enjoy Restios in your own garden.



For more information get in touch with us, and we'll do our best to help and advise you.



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Background to Restios

Restios were introduced to the UK by Trevena Cross more than 20 years ago. They are a unique group of evergreen rush/reed like plants from South Africa, and make attractive sculptural accent foliage plants – or look great in groups.

Restios could be described as somewhere between a grass and a bamboo. They don't 'run' or spread like a number of bamboos however, and while appearing similar to some grasses in shape and movement, they also have long lasting, attractive seed heads which are NOT self-seeding. In actual fact they can be quite challenging to grow from seed; to divide and replant, so we recommend planting out an established Restios (or multiples) to fill a space.

As well as offering an attractive focal point in the ground or pot, foliage can even be cut and used in flower arranging to good effect.

Planting

Restios like full sun. Most varieties are extremely fast growing and although tolerant of drought once established, will grow a lot faster if kept moist/well watered in the summer. They therefore prefer to be planted in a very well drained acidic soil that retains moisture in the summer.

Add some Topgrow planting compost to the planting hole if planting in the ground and then mulch really well with bark or similar to help retain the moisture underneath during the summer/warmer weather.

This mulch also helps protect the plant during the winter, by stopping frost getting down into the roots. This offers the best frost protection for these plants (along with good drainage) and gives them the greatest chance of surviving temperatures as low as the $-8^{\circ}\text{C}/-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ we have seen in recent winters (with additional help from frost protection fleece always welcomed too).

The varieties with non-feathery foliage tend to fair better in coastal positions as the feathery bits can take a beating from coastal winds. Even those with the feathery foliage can be pruned to remove the feathers and leave the more robust 'see-through' foliage, great in any position within a bed or border – or pot. In general, foliage can be cut down hard to produce rapidly growing, fresh new growth.

Plant with a slow release fertiliser but don't overfeed Restios – particularly avoid phosphates like bonemeal, as Restios need an acidic soil. They also have extensive fine root networks and will seek out their own fertiliser (when planted in the ground).

Pot Planting

Restios make stunning statements in a pot and the same planting rules apply – use a really well drained SylvaGrow Ericaceous compost with slow release fertiliser, positioned in a sunny spot.

Pay particular attention to watering in the warmer weather in the first years while still establishing. In time the Restios will become more drought tolerant, but it still requires extra care in a pot, as is solely reliant on what it can source from within those boundaries.

The way past winters have evolved, and the unpredictable UK climate has developed, it is also useful to utilise the flexibility and mobility a pot gives you in the garden, despite the varieties we stock at Trevena Cross being hardy down to $-8^{\circ}\text{C}/-10^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Although some varieties can appear 'straggly' when young in pots, this should only be temporary – they mature into wonderful structural specimens.

