**Introduction**

Jacobinia is an upright, evergreen shrub, 3 to 7 feet tall and wide, with large, 6-inch-long, dark green leaves and upwardly facing plumes of tubular, slightly fragrant flower clusters in rose-purple, red, yellow, orange, apricot, or white (depending on the selection), which appear from early summer until fall (Fig. 1). The plant cycles through 2 to 4 major flowering periods during the year, with few flowers in between. Many stems appear from the center of the plant and rise straight up for several feet before branching. The rapid growth and evergreen nature make jacobinia ideal for use as a foundation or mass planting. It may be used in various containers, or it may even be trained into an attractive espalier. Use it in front of a green shrubbery border to create a color accent throughout the warm months.

**General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Justicia carnea*

**Pronunciation:** juss-TISH-ee-uh KAR-nee-uh

**Common name(s):** jacobinia, flamingo plant

**Family:** Acanthaceae

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

- **Planting month for zone 8:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 9:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; cut flowers

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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**Description**

**Height:** 3 to 6 feet  
**Spread:** 2 to 3 feet  
**Plant habit:** upright; spreading  
**Plant density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** coarse

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**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** undulate  
**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval)  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

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**Flower**

**Flower color:** white; pink; apricot; yellow; lavender  
**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

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**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** pod or pod-like  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

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**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

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**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade  
**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay  
**Drought tolerance:** unknown  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

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**Other**

**Roots:** usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

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**Use and Management**

Rain and irrigation weigh the foliage down and cause the branches to spread out, sometimes touching the ground. This limits height growth and opens up the plant to allow light to enter the interior, stimulating growth from the lower stem and inner branches. It has a place in almost every garden in USDA hardiness zones 8b through 11.

Jacobinia should be grown on rich, well-drained soil that receives ample moisture in a location shaded from full-day sun. Although tender to frost, plants will grow back quickly in springtime in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9. The only necessary pruning during the growing season should be limited to removal of dead flower heads or occasional pinching to stimulate branching. Since flowers form on new growth, prune early in the spring so flower display is not reduced. This increases the number of branches and flowers and creates an attractive, full plant. Older plants benefit from rejuvenation type pruning where most of the taller stems are cut back to a node close to the ground. If this is performed each year, plants should last for many years.

Propagation is by cuttings.

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**Plant and Diseases**

Nematodes and spider mites. Caterpillars occasionally chew portions of the foliage, but these will not kill the plant.

No pests or diseases are of major concern.