

Flowering Shrubs

from the Acanthaceae family

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Plants that belong to the Acanthaceae family are popular ornamental shrubs. They are valued for their showy inflorescences comprising long-lasting bracts that come in an array of striking colours. The true flowers that emerge from overlapping bracts are often tubular in shape but short-lived.

In this article, four plants from the Acanthaceae family, namely, the shrimp plant, lobster claw, golden plume and lollipop plant, are featured. You can pay a visit to the Home Garden and Golden Garden in HortPark to take a look at these plants and learn how they can be incorporated into a landscape. HortPark is the Gardening Hub of Singapore set up by the National Parks Board (NParks) which is located at 33, Hyderabad Road, off Alexandra Road.

Cultivation

This selection of plants from the Acanthaceae family consists of sun-loving shrubs that are best planted in an open area where they can receive direct sunshine. They thrive in well draining, moisture-retentive and fertile soil and benefit from regular applications of a slow-release granular fertiliser. Plants will become leggy with time and need to be pruned back periodically to encourage bushy and compact growth.



Shrimp Plant

Botanical name:

Justicia brandegeana

Floral features:
Inflorescences that look like shrimps are made up of dark red or rusty brown bracts. True flowers are pink in colour.



Lobster Claw

Botanical name:

Ruellia colorata

Floral features:
Showy and large inflorescences with brilliant orange-red bracts that look like the claws of a cooked lobster. True flowers are similar in colour with the bracts.



Golden Plume

Botanical name:

Schaueria flavicoma

Floral features:
Curious-looking inflorescences with golden thread-like bracts that look like pom-poms. True flowers are pale yellow in colour.



Lollipop Plant

Botanical name:

Pachystachys lutea

Floral features:
Pyramidal-shaped inflorescences consisting of bright yellow bracts. True flowers are white in colour.