

Cultural Information – Columnea
(kol-LUM-nee-uh)

<u>Light:</u>	Partial sun or shade, an eastern, western or northern exposure. Northern exposures may reduce flowering.
<u>Temperature:</u>	For best results, grow in temperatures above 60°, preferably 65°.
<u>Humidity:</u>	Preferably 50% or higher; however, they will tolerate low levels without harm.
<u>Watering:</u>	Bring soil to a state of visual dryness between watering. When growing in direct sunlight, avoid wetting the leaves when watering. They are epiphytes and need a drier root system. Do not keep them evenly moist. When watering thoroughly saturate soil until a little water runs to the bottom of the pot and into the saucer.
<u>Fertilizer:</u>	They are moderate feeders; ½ tsp of fertilizer per gallon of water twice a month with a balanced fertilizer like a 15-15-15 or 7-9-5.
<u>Pruning:</u>	Remove old flowers and prune anytime growth is excessive. When young, pinch growing tips to encourage a well-branched specimen. Most are trailing plants grown in baskets and periodically they can be trimmed back to maintain the length of the stems. Pruning long, dangling leads will create a thicker plant.
<u>Insects and Disease:</u>	They have susceptibility to mealy bugs, cyclamen mites, aphids and thrip as well as whitefly. Under excessive moisture, they can have problems with root diseases.
<u>Comments</u>	Columneas are great houseplants for hanging baskets that put on stunning displays of bloom. Some are seasonal in their blooming and others are continuous. They like it warm, above 65° and require good, quality light with some direct sun. In their natural habitat, they are found growing as epiphytes and need an open, well-drained potting mix and a period of dryness between waterings. Heavy soils and long periods of moisture will reduce their vigor. Grow in an open potting mix. Contemporary soilless mixes work well. Repot once plant has completely filled the pot. Generally, we grow them in no larger than 8" pots. Although they are not fast growing plants, under good light and warm temperatures they do make beautiful specimens. Some are everblooming, some are seasonal. <i>Columnea arguta</i> flowers on previous year's stems.