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To Cute Cuphea, 'David Verity'

by MaryAnn Fink

Cuphea 'David Verity' is a hybrid cuphea, most likely of *C. ignea* x *C. micropetala* with a naturally round bushy shape and clean apple green foliage. The entire plant celebrates summer by becoming a living hummingbird feeder. Crowded with bright orange red tubular flowers tipped with light yellow fading to white, rimmed with purple, it is a winter hardy perennial in USDA Zones 8-10 that is best treated as an annual in the lower Midwest.



Whether a container companion or garden resident, it needs only average soil with good drainage and medium moisture. It tolerates some shade but blooms best with full sun.

Although *C. 'David Verity'* is humidity and heat tolerant, it does not tolerate extreme drought conditions without supplemental water.

Allow shoulder room for this stout selection. For best performance, plan for 2'x 2' space for each plant. For Patio pleasure, use a large pot, fresh potting soil and a slow release fertilizer.

A gentle tip shearing at planting will encourage a compact habit and eliminate the need for stem tips pinching during the growing season.

Over-wintering is possible but not necessary as this plant should be readily available at independent garden centers and nurseries.

Do not place this cuphea outdoors till night temperatures remain over 50 degrees.

For butterfly/ hummingbird gardens, consider combining this habitat choice with other attractants that require the same low care such as tropical *Asclepia 'Silky Red'*, *Liatris spicata*, *Clethra 'Sixteen Candles'*, orange zinnias, angelonia, heliotrope, alliums and tropical *Salvia 'Hot Lips'*.

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[MaryAnn Fink is a St Louis native always involved with greening the environment and the professional horticulture industry. She is presently Coordinator/Executive Director of the Missouri Landscape & Nursery Association, and promotes the professional green industry throughout Missouri and the Kansas City suburbs. She speaks on a variety of subjects including community greening, plant research, natural and butterfly landscapes. She is an ambassador for the National Wildlife Federation, America In Bloom, The Land Plant Development Center and Plants of Merit. She can be reached at MaryAnn@maryannfink.com and at www.growexcellence.com.]