



Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia rooperi*)

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Kniphofia commonly referred as torch lily or red hot poker is a perennial flowering plant. Torch lily is an ideal specimen or border plant, produces abundant torch like flowers when planted in sunny locations with moderate to dry soils throughout temperate regions of the country.



Kniphofia plant is a real architectural treasure and is ideally suited to home and large public Garden settings in cool climate conditions. *Kniphofia rooperi* is one of the most distinctive kniphofias with large egg shaped, bright red coloured flowers on broad and high foliage. This tall, late flowering perennial from South Africa is really one of the highlights of the late summer to early fall. Changing colour as the flower matures this robust, evergreen perennial displays the deepest shades in bud and fades as the flower opens, resulting in bicolour look, adding interesting splashes of colour to any sunny garden. Red hot pokers are also well suited to naturalistic setting, water edges or exotic style combinations where several eye-catching groups are to be found. Late flowering than some of the other red-hot pokers, *Kniphofia rooperi* provides a superb patch of brilliant colour when many of the other hot coloured subjects are beginning to fade. Kniphofias are grown for their spikes of brightly coloured, usually orange, red, yellow or greenish-white flowers.

These are borne well above the foliage and are attractive to bees. They look good among ornamental grasses and can fit into most styles of gardening, from cottage gardens to ultra modern.

This genus contains approximately 70 species of evergreen or deciduous rhizomatous perennials from southern and tropical Africa, found in moist places in the

uplands and mountains. Most of them are clump forming and have sword-shaped, often evergreen foliage, arranged in erect rosettes. The deciduous species have narrow, grassy foliage, whereas the evergreen plants often have leaves that are folded, with a keel at the back. The genus was named after Johann Hieronymus Kniphof (1704-1763), professor of medicine at Erfurt and author of a folio of nature-printed illustrations of plants in 1747. Many cultivars have been raised, ranging in height from less than 50cm (20in) to about 1.8m (6ft)

Common name	: Red hot poker, torch lily
Family	: <i>Asphodelaceae</i>
Height and spread	: 1.2m (4ft) x 60cm (2ft)
Form	: Evergreen perennial
Soil	: Fertile, humus-rich, moist but well-drained, preferably sandy
Aspect	: Full sun or partial shade
Hardiness	: Fully hardy

Cultivation :

- Grows in deep, fertile, humus-rich, moist but well-drained, preferably sandy soil. They prefer full sun but will tolerate partial shade.

- Mulch young plants with straw or leaves for the first winter.

- Thrips may cause mottling of the foliage and snails can lurk and attack flower stems and nearby plants.

- Alternaria, Botrytis and Sclerotium are the most common diseases to infect kniphofia.

- Violet root rot may be a problem.

Propagation :

- The most effective way to propagate most cultivars and species is by division in early spring.

- Seed may be sown in spring and germination is usually rapid and easy, though cultivars will not come true.

