



The Dramatic Tree Lobelia

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Lobelia gibberoa, Tree Lobelia

A member of the bellflower family, *Campanulaceae*, Lobelia is a very diverse genus of some 350 species of annuals, perennials and shrubs. And also some rather large and dramatic megaherbs from the mountains of east Africa.

Lobelia gibberoa is one of the most dramatic and unusual plants of this genus.

It grows up to three metres tall, with large pale green leaves evenly spaced along the stems. The foliage is enough to make many people want it, but the flower stalk is something else! It grows straight up another meter or so and is also pale green with a tinge of purple on the top. I have grown this amazing plant in full sun in a position that exposed it to the north winds and it looks great. The lower leaves can get a bit ratty, bugs and wind damage can do that, but they are easily removed to keep the plant looking fresh.

It is the perfect plant to add interest to a garden, planted at the rear of a border or in a boundary planting it will look fantastic. While it has multiple stems rising from the base, it doesn't spread past 1.5 metres wide, keeping the new growth to three stems keeps the leaves large and I would certainly encourage that this be done. It does require some water in summer and doesn't like being overly wet in winter so well drained soil is best for this beauty. This plant is rare and as such can only be found in some specialist nurseries but believe me its worth the hunt.