



## EVERGREEN COMEBACK

This hardy and reliable evergreen was popular in the 1950s. It is making a come back as a striking addition to any garden.

Name: '*Senecio petasitis*' or Velvet Groundsel.

**T**his evergreen shrub originates from Mexico. In our climate it is a very useful and rewarding plant for any garden. The leaves are large, hairy and soft to touch. The mid green colour of the leaves is complimented by the tinge of purple on the edges of the leaves and the stems. It can grow up to 1.8 metres by 1.5 metres and at this size is perfect in a border at the rear of the planting.

With large leaves it favours less rather than more sun. I would avoid planting this lovely thing in direct mid and late afternoon summer sun but apart from that it is tough. It is easily pruned and looks great kept 1.5 metres by 1 metre. The effect from the large soft leaves is a great contrast to other smaller leaved plants and this plant flowers from mid winter to spring, brightening up any garden with yellow daisy like clusters borne in large panicles above the foliage on purple stems. The perfect plant for that dark corner in the garden. It is easily propagated by cutting. *Senecio petasitis* was used in plantings as a foliage accent plant in the 1950s. Its back now as a reliable and dramatic and striking addition to the garden. It should be reasonably easy to find in specialist nurseries as it will be flowering well into spring. As always its well worth the search.

*Compiled by David Musker - The Jindivick Country Gardener.*