

Special plants *Pat Mansey*

Trifolium rubens

This is a clover for the herbaceous border - a hardy perennial, upright, clump forming and reaching about sixteen inches high. The leaves, made up of three leaflets, are grey and velvety. The flowers develop at the tip of the stems, usually two to a stem. Each flower cone is comprised of many small pea flowers, opening from the bottom up in a rich red colour, leaving the tip of the cone silvery coloured. *T. rubens* can easily be grown from seed, is happy in most soils, and enjoys the sun.



Fritillaria raddeana

This fritillary is similar to *F. imperialis* or crown imperial, but smaller and earlier. It is, I think, a more refined version and quite irresistible. *F. raddeana* is a large bulb needing free-draining soil and full sun, and it comes into flower quickly after emerging from the soil in late

February. Protection should be given at this stage from slugs and snails, who find it delectable. A sturdy stem rises to eighteen inches with the cluster of flowers and thin leaves at the top. The flowers develop into bell shapes; a delicate pale lemon yellow, slightly green-tinged, with orange stamens, and are set among a crown of bright green strap shaped leaves. The lower leaves are larger and form whorls around the stem.

F. raddeana is an easy plant to grow, though not often offered by nurseries. It is fully hardy and can be grown from seed.

