

Red Hot Poker (Torch Lily)

Kniphofia Moench
(ni-pof-ee-a)
Family: Asphodelaceae
Common names: Red Hot Poker, or Torch Lily



Red Hot Pokers are grown in temperate gardens around the world. Ranging in color from red, orange, through yellow to lime green and cream, numerous cultivars and hybrids have been developed from species originating in South Africa. The genus *Kniphofia* was named after Johannes Hieronymus Kniphof (1704-1763), a professor of medicine at Erfurt University in Germany.

Most species are evergreen and bloom summer through autumn, while a few are deciduous and sprout again in the early summer. Red Hot Pokers multiply very quickly like a daylily. The foliage has a sharp edge so they are great to fill in an area where you want to keep animals or kids out of. They are related to aloe, but are hardy and can be planted year round. Cover the roots three inches deep and divide when they get crowded. Replant immediately. Once established, they will grow without any care. They grow well in rich soil located in an open sunny position or partial shade, and are easily propagated from seed or division. You can find clumps in Northwest gardens over 50 years old.

Hummingbirds and other nectar-feeding birds love *Kniphofia*. When the blooms fade and turn to seed, leave them in the garden and little birds like finches and chickadees will pick them clean.

Red Hot Pokers make a striking display in the garden and do very well in the Northwest. Just plant them in a sunny spot and ignore them. They are so easy to grow; they practically take care of themselves.

Resources

Photo by WSU Master Gardener Susie Bjordahl

[Kniphofia Moench](#). Retrieved February 8, 2006.

[Kniphofia Ensifolia](#). Retrieved February 8, 2006.

Submitted by WSU Master Gardener Susie Bjordahl