

# Sinningia leucotricha

## “Brazilian Edelweiss”



Sinningia is a unique and unusual genus in the Gesneriad Family which include African Violets and Gloxinia. Fortunately they are much easier to grow and more tolerant of a much larger range of conditions than their distant cousins.

Sinningia produce multiple numbers of short stems each with 4 hairy silver leaves that continue to expand for 3 to 4 months, when the leaves are young they are very attractive and carry clusters of red tubular flowers for 2 to 3 months. New leaves are formed in Spring and grow rapidly. Once flowers are finished leaves

can be cut of and new leaves will form that may also flower. If old leaves are left on new growths will not occur until the following Spring as the plant is dormant over the winter period. The Sinningia bulb (corm) will continue to grow and can eventually reach 30 or more cm across over 30 or more years. The pictured specimen is 12 to 15 years old. Bulbs will reach about 10cm in 3 to 5 years, flowers can appear on plants only 2 years old as can be seen on the picture at the bottom left.

**Culture:** This slow growing plant thrives in full sunlight to heavy shade, avoid the worst of the summer sun to prevent the bulb scalding if the bulb is exposed. It is best grown in freely draining potting mix, and will tolerate drought and hot temperatures. Indoors choose a very sunny position. Flowers will not appear if sufficient sun is not available.

**Care:** Sinningia is a succulent plant and can survive with very little water or care however to grow a plant well regular water and fertilising is appreciated by the plant during the growing season and only in winter should the plant dry out for extended periods. Bulbs are best planted with the top of the bulb just above soil level, as the plant gets older the bulb can be raised higher to create a bonsai effect. Repot when plant appears to large in pot, older plants can go many years without repotting..

**Special Needs:** In Spring or after the old leaves are removed many shiny silver buds will appear in the centre of the plant, each one will be a new leaf stem, often to many are produced so it is best to remove most as they start to grow up al-

lowing only 1 or 2 to grow on a young plant and 4 to 6 on an older plant otherwise it becomes crowded with leaves.

Sinningia is a fascinating plant that will reward the grower with a lifetime of enjoyment, they are a pleasure to grow and demand very little from the grower.

*Good Growing  
Collectors Corner 2009*

