

# The East London Garden Society

## Plant Facts

### Geranium



The Geranium, as it is commonly known, is of the species 'Pelargonium'. Geranium is the correct botanical name of the separate species that contains the related Cranesbills.

The first species of Pelargonium known to be cultivated was *Pelargonium triste*, a native of South Africa. You can distinguish between the two by looking at the flowers. Geranium has symmetrical flowers whilst Pelargonium has irregular or maculate petals.

The name 'cranesbill' originates from the appearance of the seed-heads, which have the same shape as the bill of a Crane. The species name is derived from the Greek word 'geranos', meaning 'crane'.

Geraniums have been one of the most popular flowers in gardens for over 200 years. Few plants offer such a wide variety of colours, scents, and leaf patterns as geraniums. Adding to their popularity, is their outstanding performance in containers, both outdoors and indoors in a sunny window. They also thrive in outdoor beds, adding a wide variety of colour throughout the growing season. Discovered in South Africa, the first geranium plants quickly gained acceptance in England in the 17th century.