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Plant of the month: Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata*



Running Postman *Kennedia prostrata* is a spreading or matting perennial ground cover. It has grey-green trifoliate leaves; the leaflets are roundish, 6-35 mm in diameter, and sparsely hairy with crinkly edges. Its common name comes from the long-stalked bright red pea flowers with yellow 'eyes' at the base of the large standard petal. Flowering time is mainly August to December, followed by the development of downy pods to 5 cm containing 5-8 oblong seeds. It is widespread in various habitats in Victoria.

Running postman makes a very attractive ground cover, or trailing over a rockery or embankment. It likes well-drained soils and a mainly sunny position. Once established it tolerates dry conditions but may die back to root stock and resprout when conditions improve. It is attractive in a hanging basket. Aborigines sucked the nectar and used the stems as twine. Propagation is from seed that requires treatment to break the seed coat – either by placing in boiling water overnight or scratching the surface. It may also be grown from cuttings.



Running postman belongs in the Fabaceae or pea family. The genus is named after John Kennedy, an English nurseryman and *prostrata* comes from the Latin 'prostratus', for spreading, referring to the growth habit of the plant. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.