



One in a series.....

## Zauschneria or correctly? Epilobium canum

*Epilobium canum*, also known as California fuchsia or *Zauschneria*, is a species of willowherb in the evening primrose family (Onagraceae). It is native to dry slopes and in chaparral of western North America, especially California. It is a perennial plant, notable for the profusion of bright scarlet flowers in late summer and autumn.

Native populations of these plants exhibit considerable variation in appearance and habit. The small leaves may be opposite or alternate, lance-shaped or ovate, with short to nonexistent stalks, and range in color from green to nearly white. Overall shape may be matting or mounding, the plants commonly spreading via rhizomes. The racemes of tubular or funnel-shaped flowers are terminal, and colors are mostly reddish, ranging from fuchsia to pink to red-orange. The wide degree of variation has led to the description of many subspecies, mostly no longer recognised as distinct due to the extensive intergradation between them.

The name reflects that in the past it used to be treated in a distinct genus *Zauschneria*, but modern studies have shown that it is best placed within the genus *Epilobium*. Other common names include California-fuchsia (from the resemblance of the flowers to those of fuchsias), hummingbird flower or hummingbird trumpet. (Wikipedia)



FLOWER DETAIL

*Zauschneria* is what I'll keep calling this plant despite the botanists' penchant for seeming to enjoy confusing us with name changes every so often—although possibly *Epilobium* seems easier to say.

Years ago in Texas I tried this a few times because it looked so pretty in catalogues et al. with no luck. So moving to Arizona I once again gave it a try not expecting it to survive (negative thinking?) but during the summer all I noticed was this unspectacular plant taking up space. Rounding the corner in early September I was struck by the beginnings of those distinct red blooms (some can be yellowish). Needless to say, this plant needs to be planted much more often but, its achilles heel is this late late summer blooming... I suppose to purposely catch the hummingbirds that need a last bit of juice before flying off to wherever they disappear to in the winter.

There are a few subspecies mentioned often in the trade and selected clones... mine was sold to me as *Zauschneria arizonica*... I would suggest that if you can buy one... grab it. Planting them late in the year appears to be a big issue in their survival at higher altitudes so get them in early to insure decent root growth before winter or better yet, wait until spring.

Happy Gardening





**A tidy two foot+ bush not needing the kind of watering one would suppose.**