

## Blepharocalyx - Growing Guide

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We first saw this, as yet, rare and undiscovered plant growing at Tregrehan Garden near St Austell. Once noticed and discovered it was then easier to spot in a number of other Irish gardens between Cork and the furthest coastal gardens towards the Atlantic.

Blepharocalyx are evergreen myrtle-like tall shrubs or small trees which grow wild in Chile and Argentina. The leaves are aromatic and about 2-3in long. These plants clearly grow best in milder maritime climates. The small tree we first saw at Tregrehan had cinnamon coloured bark (ie very myrtle-like) and white scented flowers with long conspicuous stamens in mid-summer. By autumn, when we saw the plant again, it was laden with round, juicy purplish-black berries in profusion. Removing the seeds from these berries and sewing them straightaway produced a profusion of seedlings which, once overwintered, have grown on into strong plants. It is likely that this plant will self-sow itself around and about in the same way as *Amomyrtus luma* (*Myrtus luma*) does in profusion nearby existing mature trees.

Blepharocalyx may have got a bit scorched in The Beast from the East in March 2018 but, if it can survive that, then it is one of those unusual new plants wanting to find a home in many people's gardens.



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