

Clethra - Growing Guide

Growing Clethra

Clethra are a genus of 60 species from East Asia and North America. We grow only a few of them although more are under trial. The deciduous species tend to be hardier than the evergreen ones. The evergreen *C. arborea* comes from Madeira and will only survive the mildest winters outside here. This is a pity as this 'Lily of the Valley' tree is one of the finest species.

Clethra like peaty soil and partial or dappled shade. They make large shrubs (*C. alnifolia*, *C. barbinervis*) or small trees (*C. delavayi*, *C. pringleyi*, *C. monostachya*). *C. tomentosa* forms a suckering thicket.



Clethra luzmariae



C. barbinervis



Clethra delavayi



Clethra delavayi



Clethra monostachya



Clethra monostachya



Clethra monostachya



Clethra 'Cottondale'



C. tomentosa 'Cottondale'

At Burncoose the small tree species are 10-12ft tall with a nearly equivalent spread. The more shrubby forms are from 4-8ft. *C. alnifolia* is the only one to need any pruning and then only to reduce the number of older stems to make room for more suckering growth which will produce better flowers next season.

C. alnifolia and *C. barbinervis* are perfectly hardy with us. They are however quite shortlived shrubs and, in our climate, they live only for 20 to 25 years. The small tree species have a similar longevity here and need protection from wind and frost so do not grow them in a valley bottom. *C. delavayi* will stand several degrees of frost. *C. pringleyi* has yet to prove itself and becomes semi evergreen and stunted after a colder winter.



Clethra - nearly dead



Clethra - nearly dead

Clethra - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/78dFJ8WWays>

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