BURNCOOSE NURSERIES PART OF THE CAERHAYS ESTATE

Drimys - Growing Guide

Drimys - Growing Guide

After the ‘Beast from the East’ in March 2018 the 30-40ft tall trees of Drimys winteri, Winter’s bark, had droopy dead leathery leaves shrivelled and hanging forlornly on the branches. We all assumed that they were another Cornish garden casualty of this extreme weather. However, we were all wrong! New growth appeared and an evergreen tree was soon evergreen again and flowering properly in March of the next year.

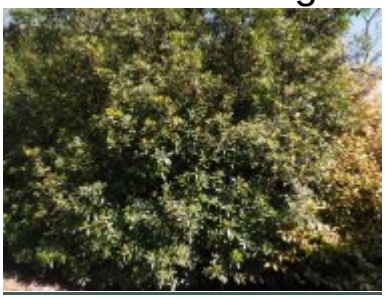
The reference books say that Drimys winteri flowers, with huge loose umbrils of ivory white flowers, in May. In Cornwall they flower in profusion at the very start of spring. This species comes from the temperate forests of Chile and has grown well for 100 or so years in all Cornish woodland gardens. In colder areas of the country it will need even more protection and shelter from cold winds. We grow it in dappled shade alongside protecting beech trees above a bamboo screen.

Drimys lanceolata (D. aromatica) is a much smaller growing large shrub or small tree from Tasmania which grew to around 10-12ft tall with a 6-8ft spread at Burncoose and Caerhays before both plants separately succumbed to honey fungus. At Tregothnan gardens near Truro they grow this shrub as a hedge facing the westerly wind where it looks outstanding. Tregothnan have also raised seedlings with exceptionally red new growth stems and creamy white flowers which are probably worthy of a clonal name. Normally the flowers on this species are white.

The difference between the two species, apart from overall height, is in the leaf size. D. winteri has 8-12in long leathery leaves which are dark green on top and blue-white underneath. D. lanceolata has lance shaped glossy dark green leaves which are only 3in long.

Drimys seed propagates quite readily when collected in late summer and sown in the autumn in a cold frame. Both species can also be grown from

semi-ripe new growth cuttings from young plants in the summer or from more mature evergreen cuttings in early autumn.



Drimys lanceolata

Drimys lanceolata

Drimys lanceolata

Drimys lanceolata

Drimys lanceolata 'Red Spice'

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Drimys winteri var latifolia

Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ
Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk
© Burncoose Nurseries 1997 - 2024