

Gordonia axillaris - Growing Guide

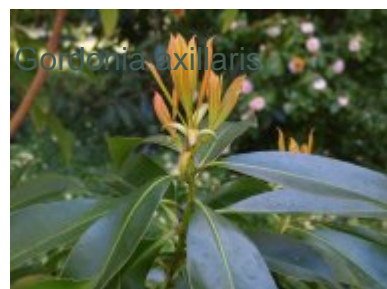
Growing Gordonia Axillaris

Although we have seen young plants flowering occasionally in the nursery this has proved to be a frustrating plant for us at Caerhays. Our plant went into the garden in a sunny but sheltered spot facing south in 1991 but we have yet to see it flower although it is now 5-6ft tall with dense evergreen foliage and an expanding spreading habit. It is at least 8ft across. Other species of Polyspora, to which *G. axillaris* is very closely related, do readily produce saucer shaped white camellia-like flowers in autumn, winter and on into early spring. Is it possible that we have simply missed seeing the flowers? Champernowne nurseries near Cridton in Devon tell the same story however about their stock plant which has also grown away very happily for decades without a hint of a flower.

This is supposedly a half hardy plant which can be frost tender but, once established, the Caerhays plant merely gets a light leaf scorching from an occasional good hard frost which it quickly grows through. The same would, we suspect, be true of exposure to cold east winds.

G. axillaris has long dark green leaves which are glossy and lance shaped. It comes from China and Vietnam and is probably best suited to the greenhouse in most colder parts of the country. Under glass it may need pruning hard each year to keep it in shape. Perhaps this is the secret to getting it to flower?

Cuttings of semi ripe new growth in September root enough with us by April or May to be potted on then.





Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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