

Helwingia - Growing Guide

Growing *Helwingia Chinensis*

These plants look dull and uninteresting evergreen plants from a distance but they have one extraordinary characteristic which makes them a welcome, if odd, addition to the greenhouse or shrub border in milder areas. The separate male and female flowers appear singly or in threes from the centre of the leaf. Although the flowers are small and greenish white they are often surrounded by tiny leaflets all in the centre of the large ovate and pointed leaves. The flowers are followed by black berries also in the centre of the leaf.

The only other plants which we grow which have this peculiar feature are some species of *Ruscus*.

The *H. chinensis* that we grow is fairly tender. There are different forms collected in more recent years from higher altitudes which are performing reasonably outside but we grow our stockplant in a large tub in the show tunnel. It gets to 3-5ft in height and attracts interest at Chelsea from serious plantsmen and collectors. We have seen it growing successfully outside at Kew and at Windsor but the forms they have exhibit smaller leaves than ours and look a bit tougher.

Cuttings are fairly easy but require bottom heat as you would expect.

This is certainly a plant to puzzle your gardening friends!



