

Hippophae - Growing Guide

Growing Hippophae Rhamnoides – Sea Buckthorn

This is one of the most salt resistant and wind tolerant plants you could ever imagine and is often used as the first line of defence against wind as a hedging plant. Hippophae are however extremely attractive trees which will grow anywhere and not just in coastal locations.

It is a deciduous shrub or small tree which will eventually grow to 20-30ft. The growth of the younger parts of the plant are covered with silvery grey scales and stiff spine topped twigs. The leaves are linear and 1-3in long with a dark green upper surface and a silvery-grey underside. Flowers appear in April and are tiny in yellow-green racemes of about ¾in long.

On female plants the flowers are followed by spherical bright orange fruits which are half an inch across. Birds dislike these fruits which are filled with an intense acid yellowish juice. They therefore persist on the tree well into early spring. In winter this is therefore a startling garden plant which, despite its spines, deserves to be more widely grown.

The only problem is that it is dioecious in that male and female flowers appear on separate trees. It is impossible to sex a seedling grown from seed until it first flowers. In a coastal hedge you probably need only one male tree to fertilise and produce fruit on five or six nearby female ones.

We have not propagated this plant ourselves in the recent past which is probably a mistake and our bought in plants have not been sexed for us as they too are seed grown. In reality you should take hardwood cuttings from female plants only in late autumn (when they have fruits showing) and propagate only a few males in a similar way. The seed can be sown in a cold frame as soon as ripe or in the spring.

Sea buckthorn grows across central Europe and into Asia and can be found growing at up to 6,000ft in the Alps. A truly hardy genus!



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Hippophae rhamnoides
'Leikora'



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'Leikora'



Hippophae rhamnoides
'Leikora'



Hippophae rhamnoides
'Pollmix'



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