

Meliosma - Growing Guide

Growing Meliosma

Meliosma represent another genus of trees and shrubs which have recently been reclassified by botanists and taxonomists. This has inevitably generated a considerable 'buggers muddle' with the names of individual species which have been known and understood for generations. Not everyone believes the experts have necessarily got it right yet!

To simplify matters here we describe just two species; *M. dillenifolia* and *M. veitchiorum*.

Meliosma dillenifolia is offered by Burncoose in two forms; *cuneifolia* and *tenuis* which were originally known as separate species under these names.

Both are wide spreading multi-stemmed deciduous shrubs. After nearly 20 years here they are 6-8ft tall with a similar spread. The leaves are serrated and the flowers appear in large downy panicles at the end of the branches. Yellowish at first the small flowers open white. The panicles can be up to 6in long and these plants present a stunning effect in July or August. We have found these to be robust and reliable plants in dappled shade rather than full sun where they struggle to get going.

M. veitchiorum has long panicles of flowers in late spring. They are creamy white and not that noticeable. What are dramatic however are the long violet seed pods which are evident as the leaves drop. We collect these on mats below the old tree and grow them in the cold frame where they take up to two years to germinate. The long pinnate leaves with red

stalk and ridged bark are attractive also. This is a slow growing small tree eventually reaching 20ft. Deer are particularly partial to the new leaves so wire netting protection is essential.



Meliosma veitchiorum



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Meliosma beanianum



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Meliosma at Caerhays - By Charles Williams July 2022

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