

Parrotia persica - Growing Guide

Caring For Parrotia Persica

Persian ironwood, Iron tree

This is a dense spreading large shrub or, more usually, a smallish spreading tree. The 40 year old tree at Caerhays is around 15-20ft tall with a stunted trunk but horizontal branches which spread 25-30ft. A plant which needs plenty of space in the woodland garden or arboretum. It comes from the Caucasus and north Iran.

It is cultivated firstly for its exceptional autumn colours when its 5in glossy green leaves turn rich shades of orange and crimson and also for its peeling bark. The flowers are tiny and usually appear in Cornwall in late February. They appear in rounded spider-like clusters and are bright red. The flowers are entirely stamens. There are no petals as such but the clusters are surrounded by dark brown bracts and appear well before the leaves so there can still be quite a show of red in the sunshine. If Hamamelis are the harbingers of spring then Parrotias are one of the announcers.



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Parrotia will grow from seed sown in the cold frame in the autumn.
Cuttings of semi ripe new growth in summer are harder.

Today we can also offer some improved named forms of Parrotia:

P. persica 'Vanessa' has a more tree-like growth habit and the young leaves and shoots are a glossy red while the maturing leaves are edged with bronze-red. Foliage colour in spring and autumn!



Parrotia persica 'Vanessa'



Parrotia persica 'Vanessa'



Parrotia persica 'Vanessa'



Parrotia persica 'Vanessa'



Parrotia persica 'Persian Spire'



Parrotia persica 'Persian Spire'



Parrotia persica 'Persian Spire'



Parrotia subaequalis

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