

Pistacia - Growing Guide

Growing Pistacia

Commonly known as 'Pistachio'

Pistacia are evergreen or deciduous trees grown for their attractive foliage rather than their flowers which are insignificant. It is the more tender *P. vera* from central Asia which produces the edible pistachio nuts.

P. lentiscus is a particularly fine foliage plant in the greenhouse or outdoors in the mildest areas. At Ventnor Botanic Gardens on the Isle of Wight it has grown into a small tree and self sows itself in the stony rockeries there. The leaves are pinnate with two to seven pairs of oblong leathery leaflets as you can see in these photographs. The reference books say the leaves are 4in long but, at Ventnor, they are larger in shelter. The Ventnor plants have evidence of old fruit clusters but we have never seen the spherical red fruits on our plants in Cornwall.

P. chinensis is a hardy deciduous tree growing up to 80ft in the wild. It has 9in long pinnate leaves with 10 to 12 leaflets. Like all pistachio species you do not usually get male and female flowers (and fruits) on the same tree. This is an attractive foliage tree with crimson autumn colours.

Pistacia will root from greenwood cuttings in late spring and early summer.



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