

Stephanandra - Growing Guide

Growing Stephanandra

These deciduous plants are native to Japan and Korea and are closely related to spiraea. As such they are totally hardy. They may perhaps not be quite as floriferous as their spiraea allies but their graceful foliage and habit certainly merits a position in the shrub border or in a woodland setting. Stephanandra will tolerate full sun or partial shade and can certainly be used to brighten up a dark corner where the soil is poorish.

Stephanandra incisa has wiry, zigzag branches forming a rounded bush of only 6ft in height with a similar spread. The ovate leaves are heart shaped at the base and the greenish white flowers appear in dense panicles from last year's growth in May to June. The leaves turn greenish yellow in winter to reveal attractive brown stems.

Stephanandra incisa 'Crispa' has more deeply lobed leaves with a wavy margin and is a useful groundcover plant in public places although not where it is very dry. It grows to only about 2ft in height.

Stephanandra tanakae is more of a thicket forming shrub which grows to around 8-10ft in height. The leaves are triangular with three or five lobes and pronounced teeth at the leaf edges. Yellowish white flowers appear in June or July in lax branching panicles. The leaves exhibit an orange autumn colour.

Pruning out the older growth shoots after flowering will reinvigorate an older plant but is only necessary occasionally.

Stephanandra grow comfortably in any moist well drained soil and have no special requirements. The plants form root suckers in maturity which can be lifted and moved when the plant is dormant. Softwood cuttings in early summer are the alternative.



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