

Sycopsis - Growing Guide

Growing *Sycopsis Sinensis*

This is an evergreen, bushy shrub or small tree from China. It is closely related to hamamelis and has many similar characteristics. The leaves are dark green and leathery on the topside and paler or glabrous beneath. The flowers appear in February or March as short dense clusters from black-brown felted buds which are clearly visible in the previous autumn. The flowers have no petals but open as a mixture of red anthers and yellow filaments with the brown felting still surrounding them.

These plants are perfectly hardy and make an unusual flowering addition to the spring garden perhaps a little after the hamamelis. Ours is now about 15ft tall after 20 years or so. It remains upright and not spreading like hamamelis. The small tree does not set seed with us or not so as we have noticed yet anyway!

Confusion can arise with this plant because a bigeneric hybrid between *sycopsis* and *parrotia* has been named *x sycoparrotia semidecidua*. This cross was first made in 1968. As you might expect it looks much the same in flower with a bit more red and the felting around the flower is lighter in colour. The only real difference is that, with us, it loses all its leaves in winter albeit still as a small plant.

Not to everyone's taste but certainly 'different'!



Sycopsis tutcheri



Sycopsis sinensis



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