

Agathis - Growing Guide

Growing Agathis Australis

Kauri pine

Despite its peculiar appearance this is a coniferous tree with an erect conical habit as a young tree. It is native to the North Island in New Zealand and, as such, it is very much borderline hardy in all but the very mildest coastal areas.

We have only just started to propagate this rare tree at Caerhays from hardwood cuttings and, although it will be a rare novelty, on the Burncoose website in very limited quantities. The cuttings take at least a year to callous up and then root in the heated mist benches here.

The tree at Caerhays is now around 15ft in height after 20 years and grows in full sun in a hot dry location. It was exposed to the cold windchill from the March 2018 'Beast from the East' with no ill effect but would probably have succumbed as a juvenile plant in such cold conditions where it had not developed a woody trunk.

There are established specimens at several Cornish gardens including Trevarno, Tremenheere and, more obviously, Tresco. Along the southern Irish Atlantic coastline where the absence of frost, and the even higher rainfall than Cornwall, makes growing these plants easier there are some memorable specimen plants. Fota arboretum and Garnish Island have mature trees which are producing male and female cones.

In immaturity *A. australis* has bright green lance shaped leaves but, as the tree develops, these become yellowy green or bronzy-green. Our plant at Caerhays has yet to develop any cones.



Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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