

Atherosperma - Growing Guide

Growing *Atherosperma Moshatum*

Australian sassafras

This is an attractive evergreen tree originating from SE Australia and Tasmania. It has proved completely hardy in the garden at Burncoose where it has developed into a tall pyramidal small tree of around 15ft in height after 25 years. It grows in a fairly sheltered spot in dappled shade but the equally successful plant at Caerhays grows in full sun in a hot dry situation where it is subjected to more east wind.

The leaves are lance-shaped dark green with a nutmeg scent when crushed. The branches droop slightly from the main trunk nearer the ground. In early spring, and usually in February in Cornwall, this plant produces an abundance of solitary, saucer-shaped, creamy white flowers from the upper leaf axils. These are highly fragrant and it is therefore advisable to grow this plant near a path where the scent can be appreciated.

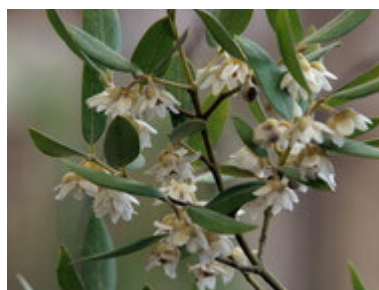
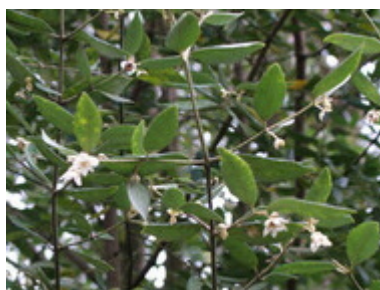
Propagation is straightforward (if a little slow) from semi-ripe cuttings taken in early summer. We have not yet tried to grow this plant from seed since it is a dioecious species with male and female flowers on different plants. We have only one!

No pruning is necessary or advisable.

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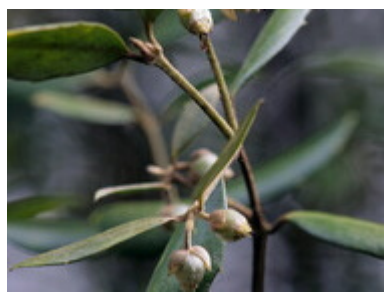
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