

Celastrus - Growing Guide

Growing Celastrus Orbiculatus

Commonly known as 'Oriental Bittersweet' or 'Staffvine'

This is another of these annoying plants where you need a male and a separate female plant to witness the clusters of lovely yellow fruit which the females of this vigorous deciduous climber produce. As usual there is no way of knowing which is which until maturity unless you propagate from separate male and female plants. Sadly, our stockplant is resoundingly male and unisexual so we buy in other plants and you take a chance!

However this plant is well worth growing just for its outstanding yellow autumn colouring. It is quite the most spectacular wall shrub in the nursery in late September and October. The small green clusters of flowers in summer are insignificant. The leaves are up to 5in long and broadly ovate.

This climber will grow up to 40ft and therefore needs its long tendrils of new growth pruning out annually to keep it in shape if grown against a wall. However, it is an ideal climber for an old tree trunk or for climbing up a mature tree where there is plenty of light reaching the trunk. The first new growth may need tying in but this vigorous plant will soon twine its way up and over the branches with long trailing shoots hanging down. This is the best way to enjoy the splendid autumn colour.

C. orbiculatus is totally hardy and tolerant of partial shade. It is easily layered or grown from root cuttings. The seed are easy to propagate if sown when ripe in a cold frame. The only trouble is, of course, that you will have no idea of the sex of the seedlings!



View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/XfXsF7hdgLg?rel=0>

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