

## Chordospartium - Care Guide

### **Chordospartium - Care Guide**

Cord broom, Weeping broom

(Formerly *Carmichaelia stevensonii*)

I first saw this most peculiar small tree growing and flowering away at Ventnor Botanic Garden in the Isle of Wight one June. *Chordospartium*s are natives to the South Island of New Zealand where they grow in river estuaries. These are tender plants and difficult to grow outside coastal gardens in the mildest areas of the country. However the Hillier arboretum has grown this plant successfully near Romsey and the RHS gave it an Award of Merit in 1943 when it was exhibited by Exbury Gardens.

The principal Ventnor tree is 15ft or so in height with a similar spread from several main stems and you walk underneath it on a main path there by the fernery in deep shelter. This shrub or tree has a most peculiar appearance in that small leaves are borne only on young plants in the nursery and here they persist for only three or four months. Otherwise the slender young and mainly unbranched shoots are minutely ribbed. On more mature plants round racemes of individual tiny pea like flowers appear in June/July either singly or in clusters. They are pale lilac in colour and you can see some (poorish) photographs below from Ventnor.

This rare and unusual plant needs a hot, dry and very sheltered environment to thrive. Otherwise it should be treated as a specialist conservatory or greenhouse plant. We have however found some demand for it by mail order.

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