

Cunninghamia lanceolata - Growing Guide

Growing Cunninghamia Lanceolata

China fir

At Caerhays there are a few mature specimens of this unusual coniferous tree whose leaf arrangement somewhat resembles that of a monkey puzzle. They have grown to 70ft but have, depressingly, often split and shed side branches in wind exposure to leave misshapen trees with large branches of unsightly dead leaves. At Burncoose we have recognised the problem and grow this tree in a much more sheltered position. More importantly, we have removed the large more erect side branches which emerge lower down the trunk and which are most likely to split out later. Not all trees form a clear leader early on so you can help by judicious pruning.

C. lanceolata has lance shaped glossy dark green leaves of up to 3in in length with a raised midrib and two white bands underneath. The female seed cones are green-brown and appear only on more mature trees. We have germinated seed from these cones easily in spring in the greenhouse but late autumn evergreen cuttings will root by the spring. When young cuttings are potted they can be fairly 'floppy' in pots and need canes to support the central leader until and after they are finally planted out.



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