BURNCOOSE NURSERIES PART OF THE CAERHAYS ESTATE

Dipteronia - Growing Guide

Growing Dipteronia Sinensis

This is a rare and little known tree for the woodland garden which grows with us as a spreading several stemmed shrub rather than having a central leading stem or trunk. Our plants are 10ft or so tall with an anticipated eventual height of around 30ft.

It was discovered by Ernest Wilson in central China at elevations of 3,500-5,000ft above sea level and introduced to the UK soon after 1900.

It is a plant grown for its ornamental foliage and fruits rather than its flowers which are rather dull. The leaves are pinnate and up to 12in or more long with seven to eleven toothed leaflets. The flowers are polygamous in that bisexual and unisexual flowers appear on the same plant. The panicles of greenish white flowers in summer are followed by clusters of flat spherical winged red brown fruits similar to those seeds seen on an elm or a ptelia. Certainly they are conspicuous.

Before the 1990 hurricane there was a mature record tree at Caerhays which was remembered for its autumn colour and distinctive dark bark. Sadly I can only faintly remember it and we must now wait for the new younger plants to get a bit larger. They are doing well in dappled shade.

Although we have not tried recently it is probably possible to propagate this rare small tree from softwood cuttings taken in summer.

D. sinensis

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