

Disanthus - Growing Guide

Growing Disanthus Cercidifolius

This deciduous shrub from China and Japan is grown primarily for its splendid autumn colour. Its judas tree like leaves turn claret red and purple suffused with orange in mid autumn. We have seen this growing best in partial shade alongside a small stream in Sussex. From a distance it seemed to be a grove of hazels growing in a similar multi stemmed fashion. Close to the leaves are roundish to heart shaped, 2-4in long, and with a blue green hue. Clearly not corylus!

Disanthus cercidifolius is reputed to be difficult to get established and we have certainly found this to be the case at Caerhays where three times we have planted groups of three plants which have all failed. We have only succeeded when the plant has been grown in sheltered boggy conditions. It will sit and look at you in a dry or coldish shady position for a year or two gradually withering away to a dead stalk.

D. cercidifolius flowers in October in a hamamelis-like fashion which is no surprise when you realise that it is related to this family. The flowers are spidery and bright rose red. Similar, in fact, to *Hamamelis virginiana*. The seeds from the previous year are only ripe as the flowers appear.

This shrub will not propagate from cuttings but it may be layered. The seeds, if you get that far, can be sown in a cold frame.

A difficult and expensive plant but very rewarding and well worth the effort when you succeed.



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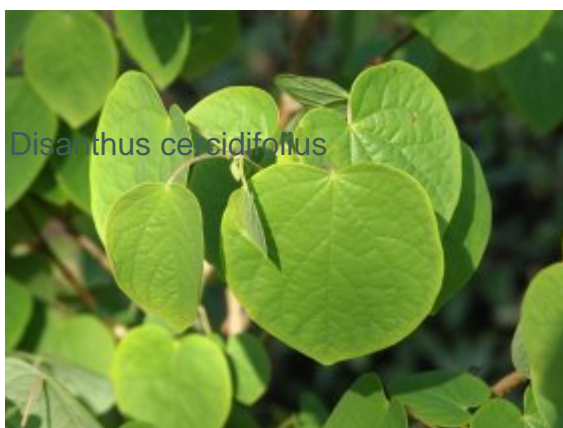
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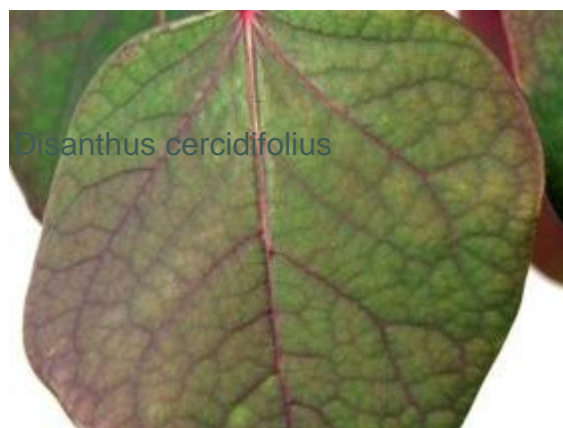
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Burncoose Nurseries: Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 1209 860316 Fax: +44 (0) 1209 860011 Email: info@burncoose.co.uk

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