BURNCOOSE NURSERIES PART OF THE CAERHAYS ESTATE

Dodonea - Growing Guide

Growing Dodonea Viscosa

Commonly known as ‘Hop Bush’

These plants derive their common name from their plentiful seed capsules which can be a variety of colours from pink to red or yellow and resemble elm or hop seeds with a clear flat membrane surrounding a central seed. The foliage of Dodonea can be especially attractive and this is another reason for growing this peculiar shrub or small tree where you can.

Dodonea viscosa and Dodonea viscosa ‘Purpurea’, with their long wavy leaves, are now a fairly common sight in sheltered seaside gardens and in shrub borders in milder counties. At Ventnor Botanic Gardens on the Isle of Wight this plant is used as a hedge and self sows itself on bare soil in this warm nearly frost free cliffside garden.

There is no doubt that the reference books have this down as a frost tender plant. Perhaps because it has acclimatised over the years or perhaps because of the current run of mild winters, it is now well established as a garden plant and is perfectly happy in the stock garden at Burncoose. Hardier stock from less subtropical coastal regions perhaps? D. viscosa ‘Purpurea’ seems tougher than the green leaved forms.

D. viscosa has an upright habit with 3-5in obovate leaves that have long irregular wavy margins. The flowers are petalless and insignificant but the seed capsules form quickly and hold on the tree onto the next season.

If you grow these plants in the greenhouse you may well have to prune them back to contain them. This will not hurt the plants at all. Under glass use a loam based potting compost, water freely in summer and feed occasionally with liquid feed. Outdoors they like hot dry and well drained positions.

Seed is easily germinated in spring in containers in a warm greenhouse. Semi ripe cuttings are easy to root in summer with bottom heat.



Dodonea viscosa



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Dodonea viscosa purpurea



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Colour reverting Dodonea

View this video on Youtube here https://www.youtube.com/wbm7cCsyzwI

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