

## Elaeagnus - Growing Guide

### **Growing Elaeagnus**

Most species and varieties of Elaeagnus are extremely tough, large growing, evergreen shrubs but other species which we offer are larger growing shrubs and small trees.

Elaeagnus are grown because of their colourful silvery and multi variegated leaves. More importantly the evergreen x *ebbingei* and *pungens* varieties make very effective windbreaks and hedges. The spikes and spines in some varieties are an effective deterrent to intruders alongside their dense and spreading habit. You frequently see them used for this purpose on the edge of parks and in supermarket car parks. In coastal areas they tolerate extreme exposure to wind and salt spray and, in maturity, *E. x ebbingei* and *E. pungens* varieties will grow to around 10-12ft with a broadly similar spread.

While these are primarily foliage plants they do have attractive tubular or bell shaped flowers produced in clusters on the leaf axils. These can be extremely fragrant and some species then go on to produce colourful berries. Elaeagnus will tolerate very dry soil conditions and can readily be hard pruned to keep them into shape along a path or walkway. Variegated leaved varieties often have branches which revert to plain green but these can readily be cut out to improve the overall effect or simply left to give a contrast. While easily grown from seed most evergreen varieties will readily layer and root themselves at the edges of a clump so that these can be dug and moved. Deciduous species produce numerous root suckers which can also be dug and moved elsewhere.

### **Evergreen varieties with colourful leaves**

*E. x ebbingei* itself has dark sea-green leaves with silvery scales underneath. The flowers appear in the autumn and are creamy white.

*E. x ebbingei* 'Coastal Gold' has bright gold splashed leaves.

*E. x ebbingei* 'Gilt Edge' has leaves with dark green centres and conspicuous yellow edges.

*E. x ebbingei* 'Limelight' has silvery young leaves which become marked with yellow and pale green in the centres.

*E. pungens* 'Maculata' ('Aureovariegata') has leaves with dark yellow centres.

*E. pungens* 'Frederici' is slower growing with narrow creamy yellow leaves with dark green margins.

### **Deciduous varieties**

*E. angustifolia*, Oleaster, is a large spiny shrub with silvery-grey willow leaves and yellowish-white flowers in June.

*E. angustifolia* 'Quicksilver' has silvery shoots and tapering silvery leaves. A suckering shrub.

*E. commutata*, Silverberry, is a thicket forming species with silver scaly leaves and pendant white flowers.

*E. umbellata* has silvery young leaves maturing to bright green. It has naturalised locally into our Cornish hedgerows. The flowers are yellow-white and the silvery fruits turn red in autumn.

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