

Exochorda - Growing Guide

Growing Exochorda

Commonly known as 'Pearl Bush'

These are very popular and easy to grow shrubs which produce a spectacular show in March and April. There are four separate species originating from China and we offer three of them. They are closely related to spiraea with white flowers but the flowers of exochorda are much larger as are the bony fruits.

Exochorda grow best in fertile but well drained soil in full sun or shade. Apart from *E. racemosa* they will tolerate lime soils. With us exochorda grow to around 10 or 12ft in height but their arching branches spread just as widely. They can form a nice backdrop to a shrub border or they are excellent standalone specimen plants in the woodland garden.

E. x macrantha 'The Bride' is a hybrid produced in 1900 in France between *E. korolkowii* and *E. racemosa*. It exhibits all the attributes of both species which hybrid vigour can create and achieve. This plant produces racemes of white flowers from every leaf bud of the previous year's growth. The racemes are 3-4in long and appear at the end of a short leafy twig. Each raceme has six to ten white flowers of 1-1½in across.

E. racemosa 'Niagra' is a more recent introduction with a compact habit which is more suitable for smaller gardens. It can readily be grown as a low hedge perhaps to edge a border.

E. serratifolia has, as its name implies, large serrated leaves and a more upright habit. It is highly floriferous and can create just as fine a display as 'The Bride'. At Caerhays you would have a job to tell the difference from a distance.

These plants can be fairly short lived (say 25 years) as a result of overflowing and overseeding. The easiest way to propagate exochorda is from softwood cuttings taken in mid summer and rooted on bottom heat. Seed is best sown in the autumn in the cold frame.



Exochorda racemosa 'Niagra'



Exochorda racemosa 'Niagra'



Exochorda serratifolia



Exochorda serratifolia



Exochorda x macrantha 'The Bride'



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