

Ginkgo biloba - Growing Guide

Growing Ginkgo Biloba

Maidenhair tree

Ginkgos are a genus of one species of deciduous trees from south China. It is believed that these trees are extinct in the wild but have survived in plantings alongside Buddhist temples. These came to Europe and the UK in the early to mid-18th century and are now common street and parkland trees in our cities. In the centre of Tokyo ginkgos line the streets in the same way as our London plane trees (*Platanus acerifolia*) do in our capital city. This is a tree which will tolerate industrial areas where air quality is poor and pollution at its highest.

It is difficult to appreciate that ginkgos are in fact coniferous trees. The giveaway is their 'flowers'. Ginkgo are dioecious with male and female coniferous stroboli on separate trees. The two mature trees at Caerhays grow in reasonably close proximity but because they are both one sex no fruits have been produced. The male flowers are catkin like and in clusters about 3in long. The single solitary and rounded female flowers which we occasionally see high up on our trees would, if fertilised, produce yellow-green fruit of about 1.5in in length. The fleshy fruit has a horrible smell as it decays to reveal large edible nuts.

The key reason for growing ginkgo trees is for their intricate leaf form and for their exceptional and long lasting bright yellow autumn colour. At Caerhays our trees are 70-80ft tall after 100 years. These are not quick growing trees. The leaves are mid green and fan shaped and taper back to the leaf stalks. The ends of the leaves are lobed. If one had to select a trio of trees which give us the longest lasting and best autumn colour in Cornwall ginkgo would top the bill followed by Liquidambar and Liriodendron.

There are several named cultivars of *G. biloba* which the nursery offers today. 'Autumn Gold' is a conical male form with exceptional golden autumn colour. 'Saratoga', also a male, is a compact small tree with interesting foliage and there is also a variegated leafed form which has its attractions although you need to keep an eye out for twigs and branches which revert to green and need to be cut out.



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Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



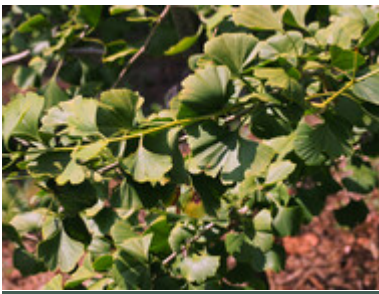
Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



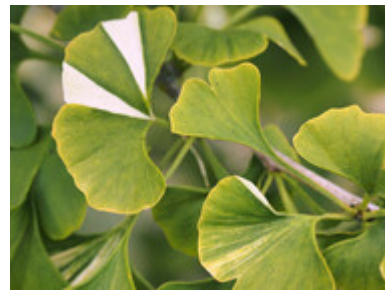
Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



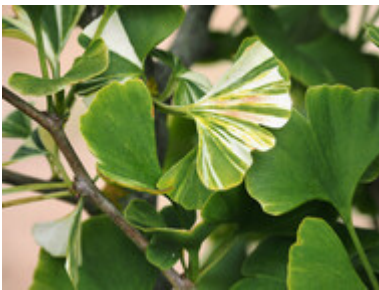
Ginkgo biloba 'Autumn Gold'



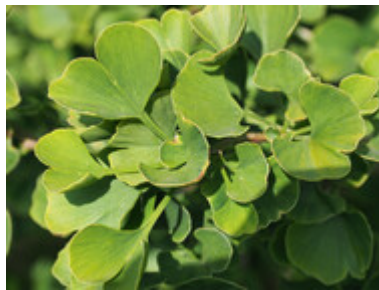
Ginkgo biloba 'Saratoga Variegata'



Ginkgo biloba 'Variegata'



Ginkgo biloba 'Variegata'



Ginkgo 'Jade Butterflies'



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Gingko biloba 'Saratoga'



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Gingko biloba 'Saratoga'

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/VEUleNuvSSY>

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