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Heptacodium Growing Guide

Growing Heptacodium Miconioides

(H. jasminoides)

Just when you thought that the woodland garden was really over and all that was to come was autumn colour along comes another large Chinese shrub which flowers in August to October and is one of those plants which really attract butterflies.

H. miconioides is a genus of only one unique species which grows in the wild at up to 3,000ft. This makes it a fully hardy deciduous shrub in the UK growing to around 12ft tall with a spread of 6ft or so. The reference books say that it grows taller than this but we have yet to see a plant doing better than the sizes stated. This may well be because it is, with us anyway, fairly short lived. It grows and seeds exponentially in our high rainfall and this may well affect and restrict its longevity to around 20 years. It is also said to be multi stemmed but our plants have never grown in this fashion.

The plant has attractive peeling light brown bark in maturity. The three veined leaves start out as light green but harden to dark green tinged with purple in the autumn. The numerous flowers are star shaped and fragrant in small clusters or panicles all along the new growth to the end of the twigs. When the flowers drop they reveal pink calyxes which finally turn purple. Quite a show for this time of the year!

Sow the seed immediately when it is ripe in the autumn. Softwood cuttings in spring are easier to overwinter than those taken later in the summer months.

View this video on Youtube here https://www.youtube.com/s3ydmUbCEt0?si=O4Tfj-LH_4KXDf03

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