

Lithocarpus - Growing Guide

Growing *Lithocarpus Pachyphyllus*

Burncoose is occasionally able to offer seed grown *L. pachyphyllus* from seed collected at Caerhays Castle Gardens. The seed of this evergreen oak is germinated in cold frames where it may take two or three years to germinate if you are successful in keeping the mice away from the acorns.

The seeds (acorns) appear in huge clusters in the autumn which are so large and heavy that they can break off whole branches. Within these clusters (if you beat the squirrels to it) only a few of the very largest acorns of this evergreen oak tree are big enough to be viable and germinate. Many are far too small. The clusters do however make unusual Christmas decorations.

L. pachyphyllus at Caerhays has grown to 80-100ft in height with a similar spread and the branches reach down to the ground on all sides of this beautiful evergreen tree with huge leathery leaves. One of the Caerhays trees is a UK and Irish record tree by height and girth. The photographs below show how the male and female inflorescences appear on the same terminal stems. Sometimes two crops of 'flowers' are produced each year but do not expect to get huge acorn clusters every year (in mature trees only) as late frosts can kill the flowers on occasion. Trees need to be about 30 years old to start flowering and producing seed clusters.

Caerhays grows several other species of *Lithocarpus* but other species do not set seed so often or so readily. In 2019 *L. cleistocarpa* set seed for the first time ever on a youngish 40 year old tree which was originally grown, with great difficulty, from a cutting. *L. hansei*, *L. glabra* and *L. glauca* sometimes start to form seed clusters but they do not seem to develop properly. A 30 year old *L. variolosus* has twice been close to producing proper seed clusters and will, hopefully, do so soon. Caerhays has a number of other species of *Lithocarpus* which are still only small trees – *L. corneus*, *L. lepidocarpus* and *L. henryi*.

L. pachyphyllus needs protection from cold easterly winds as a young plant to avoid defoliation and the new growth frosts off easily so do not grow this tree in a frost pocket.



Lithocarpus glabrata



Lithocarpus hancei



Lithocarpus pachyphyllus



Lithocarpus pachyphyllus



Lithocarpus quercifolia

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/yYD3Fufd7O0>

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