

Myrtus - Growing Guide

Growing Myrtus / Myrtle

Today the botanists have much reduced the number of species of myrtle included under this genus heading. Only *Myrtus communis*, the common myrtle, is now deemed to be part of this group of Myrtaceae while other species of myrtle are now classified as *Amomyrtus*, *Luma* or *Ugni*. This is indeed confusing and difficult to understand for those who have enjoyed myrtles of different sorts in their gardens for decades.

Myrtus communis is reasonably hardy in milder coastal locations although, with us, it has taken a bashing in cold winters when *Luma apiculata* (formerly *Myrtus luma*) has been untouched. It is an aromatic and densely leafed shrub reaching eventually a height of 9-12ft. Its white flowers appear in profusion in July and August followed by purple-black berries. The plant is thoroughly naturalised in Mediterranean regions and that is perhaps why when, this plant is grown from seed, some specimens seem to be tougher and more vigorous than others.

M. communis subsp. *tarentina* is a particular favourite of mine growing as it does in our dry, sandy coastal garden in Seaview on the Isle of Wight. The plant has small narrow leaves and is extremely compact. The white flowers have a pink tinge and appear in late July. They are followed by white berries. A neat and attractive plant whose dark foliage belies the poor conditions in which it thrives. It grows here to only 4ft in height with a 3ft spread.

Semi-ripe cuttings can be rooted with bottom heat in late summer when the new growth has hardened. Seeds are perhaps easier when sown in autumn in the cold frame.



MYRTUS communis



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MYRTUS communis subsp. tarentina



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View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/GW673fYZjlk>

Myrtus Communis Self-sown Seedlings - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/7ueLwbtaSsY>

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