

Osmanthus - Growing Guide

Growing Osmanthus

Sweet olive

Osmanthus are excellent hardy small trees and shrubs for the woodland garden. Those species which have less attractive and plentiful flowers make up for it with interesting and diverse new growth and coloured holly-like foliage. They all have thick leathery leaves and most have holly like spines in one form or another on or at the end of their leaves. Some forms are easier to identify than others which can look a bit similar until they actually flower. While they are not actually windbreak evergreen shrubs they can be used in larger woodland plantings to protect more tender plants in their lee. They can certainly take the wind as well.

The only species which we sadly offer only occasionally is *O. fragrans* which we found was just too tender for anywhere but a large greenhouse. At Tregrehan Garden they grow *O. fragrans* f. *aurantiacus* which has highly fragrant tubular clusters of orange flowers in profusion in the autumn where it grows to 15ft or more in height. A magnificent plant!

I have listed these species of Osmanthus in accordance with my own personal view of their attractiveness and beauty in the gardens here:

O. delavayi from China is one of the harbingers of spring in Cornwall, and the first species to flower here when it only has the camellias and early magnolias to compete with. It starts out as a small, and remains for quite a time, as a rounded bush with small toothed dark green leaves but it will grow, in maturity, to 20ft or so here after 60 to 80 years. The flowers are white and highly fragrant. They literally cover the bush. The clusters of flowers show up well in front of the darker leaves and this is a fine plant for the smaller garden.



Osmanthus decorus

Osmanthus decorus



O. yunnanensis



Osmanthus yunnanensis



Osmanthus yunnanensis

O. x burkwoodii is O. decorus x O. delavayi. It is an excellent plant with the vigour and the best attributes of both its parent species. It grows to 15ft or so eventually and has very scented tubular white flowers in mid to late spring. It sells better than O. delavayi but it ought not to!

Osmanthus x 'Burkwoodii'



Osmanthus x 'Burkwoodii'



Osmanthus x 'Burkwoodii'



O. x fortunei



O. x fortunei



O. x fortunei



O. x fortunei



Osmanthus heterophyllus



Osmanthus heterophyllus



Osmanthus heterophyllus



Osmanthus heterophyllus

There are three other forms of *O. heterophyllus* which the nursery stocks which are probably more interesting woodland garden plants:

‘Aureomarginatus’ has golden edged foliage and grows with us to 20ft after 30 years.



Osmanthus
'Aureomarginatus'



O.heterophyllus
'Aureomarginatus'



O.heterophyllus
'Aureomarginatus'



Osmanthus heterophyllus
'Purpureus'



Osmanthus heterophyllus
'Purpureus'



Osmanthus heterophyllus
'Variegatus'



O.heterophyllum 'Party
Lights'

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/NYhewuZ9aJk>

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