

Xanthocyparis - Growing Guide

Growing Xanthocyparis Vietnamensis

This new and unique species of conifer was only discovered and collected in northern Vietnam in the last 20 or so years. The earliest UK introductions are growing in the Bedgebury National Pinetum in Kent but there are now small established clumps of trees at Tregrehan near St Austell and we have one powering ahead at Caerhays.

In the wild this evergreen tree grows to a maximum of 40-50ft with a pyramidal crown ageing to a flat topped shape with horizontally spreading branches.

What makes this plant so exciting and unusual to grow is the extraordinary difference between its immature juvenile growth and the reality of when it changes to being a far more recognizable 'Cyparis'. Almost tadpole and frog!

The juvenile leaves are in spreading whorls (of four) and bushy sprays of pointed leaves which are, initially, slightly blue-green above with two white bands underneath. The mature leaves are totally different and begin to appear irregularly in parts of young trees after the third to fifth year (with us). The mature leaves are overlapping in flattened sprays. Totally different!

This plant propagates readily from fresh new immature growth as we have enjoyed discovering in order to make this exceptional new plant more widely available to UK gardeners.

Quite a talking point on a garden tour and completely hardy as far as we have seen for ourselves. We planted it in an absurd place five years ago and will have to move it quickly to give it more room to develop properly.

In maturity we are told that the foliage droops from the higher branches and some twigs and branches still continue to exhibit the immature style foliage.



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