

x *Crataemespilus grandiflora* - Growing Guide

Growing x *Crataemespilus Grandiflora*

This small deciduous tree with a rounded habit and pendulous lower branches is an unusual and rare naturally occurring hybrid between two species from two separate genera: *Crataegus* and *Mespilus*. It is thought that the original tree which first appeared in the UK before 1800 was a cross between the medlar, *Mespilus germanica*, with the other parent being a hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna* or *Crataegus oxyacantha*.

Crataegomespilus is something different again in that this is a chimaera which has arisen from deliberate graft of *Mespilus germanica* onto *Crataegus monogyna*. The resulting propagated plants exhibit, on different parts of the plant, characteristics of both the parents. This is exactly what happened with x *Laburnocytisus adamii* which is also a similarly and extremely rare chimaera.

x *Crataemespilus grandiflora* flowers with great abandon in late May and is then a luxuriantly leafy tree carpeted with pairs or trios of white flowers on short woolly stalks. The fruits are globular, fleshy and yellowish-brown. They contain two hard stones and resemble the fruit of a hawthorn more than that of a medlar.

WJ Bean describes the tree as 'an admirable ornament on the lawn' where the habit, flowers and fruit can be appreciated. The fruits appear to be sterile so this tree is usually propagated by grafting it back onto a rootstock from one of its natural parents.

If nothing else the story of this plant makes interesting telling and you will see here photographs of flowers which sadly were over before we could exhibit small plants at Chelsea in 2019.



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