

x Sorbaronia - Growing Guide

Growing x Sorbaronia

It is unusual in nature that two very different genera of plants are capable of being cross fertilised so that the offspring have features of both parents. They need related characteristics but, even then, producing successful progeny is rare.

One such group, x Sorbaronia, are crosses between species of sorbus and species of Aronia which are both members of the Rosaceae family. Sorbus are trees and Aronia are shrubs. Both have similar types of flowers which are sexually compatible although very different in size.

From time to time Burncoose has stocked x Sorbaronia fallax (a cross between Sorbus aucuparia and Aronia melanocarpa) and x Sorbaronia sorbifolia (a cross between Sorbus americana and Aronia melanocarpa). Both have grown from being medium sized shrubs into attractive and unusual small trees at Caerhays which puzzle expert visitors to the gardens because they have characteristics of both parents.

Both these x Sorbaronia were created in 1878 (fallax) and 1893 and are of garden origin rather than naturally occurring hybrids in the wild.

S. fallax has white flowers in smallish upright clusters, purplish fruits and orange-red autumn colours while S. sorbifolia has very similar flowers and near black fruits (as you would expect). S. fallax has downy elliptic leaves divided into two or three pairs of lobed leaflets while S. sorbifolia has less downy and much shorter acuminate leaves.

Our plants grow in full sun in the open but the reference books say semi-shade is fine as is any soil.



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