



Top 50 Shrubs & Small Trees to plant for Pollinators

A selection of medium to large shrubs and small trees that you can grow in UK gardens to benefit our pollinating insects

List Curated by Thomas McBride

From research data collected and collated at the
National Botanic Garden of Wales

NB: Butterflies and Moths are not studied at the NBGW so any data on nectar plants beneficial for them is taken from Butterfly Conservation



Guide to using these pages:

Map

Maps depict the native area of the plant (in green)
They also show areas the plant is naturalised (in purple)

Latin Binomial
Name

Ribes sanguineum

Common
English
Name

Red-flowered Currant

Photograph
of the plant
in flower

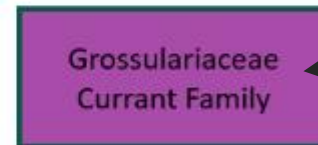


Insect groups
known to
favour the
nectar of this
plant



All maps shown
are derived from
'Plants of the
World Online';
courtesy of Kew
Gardens

Flowering Period
(this is when it is good
for pollinators!)



Plant Family

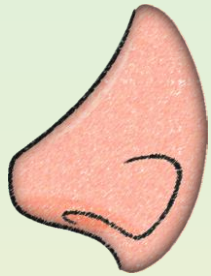
Growing habit
and mature size
of the plant

Useful knowledge or warnings about the plant

RHS AGM cultivars of this species (or a related species occasionally)

Key to these Pages

Additional information on these garden plants



The flowers and/or leaves have a Pleasant scent

This plant would only be suitable for meadow-style planting



Plant is often used in traditional Herbal Remedies



The plant has edible parts that are commonly eaten or used in cooking



Warnings



Plant tissue is highly toxic if ingested



Sap may cause irritation (Wash hands after touching or avoid touching)

Temperature

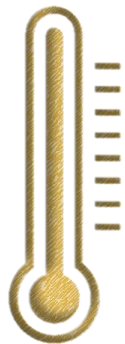
Some of the plants listed in our Top 200 are not fully hardy in all or some parts of the United Kingdom.

Plants without a thermometer symbol are fully hardy in the severest UK Winter; equating to **H5** or hardier.

Plants with a coloured thermometer symbol are hardy to varying degrees as follows:



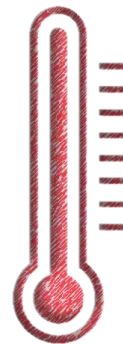
Almost Hardy
(H4)



Half-Hardy
(H3)



Not Frost Hardy
(H2)



Not Hardy
(H1)

RHS Hardiness Scale

H1a	-	Above 15°C
H1b	-	Minimum 10°C
H1c	-	Minimum 5°C
H2	-	Minimum 1°C
H3	-	Minimum -5°C
H4	-	Minimum -10°C
H5	-	Minimum -15°C

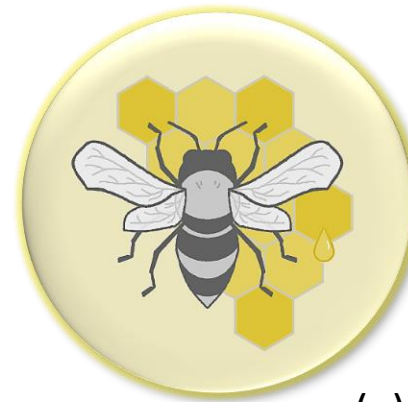
Pollinators

Our data on pollinators has been collected from studies spanning over a decade. Pollinator symbols appear when plants are proven to be good nectar plants for certain insects.

It should be noted that all bee and hoverfly data is ours but lepidoptera data is taken from Butterfly Conservation.

Our data spans a wide range of different insect species. For simplicity, these species have been condensed into six easy icons to represent them:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| a) Honeybees | c) Bumblebees | e) Moths |
| b) Hoverflies | d) Butterflies
(Includes Moths) | f) Solitary Bees |



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

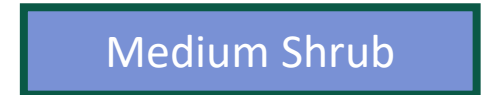
Abelia x grandiflora

Garden Abelia

Abelia chinensis x *Abelia uniflora*



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Manuel M Vicente

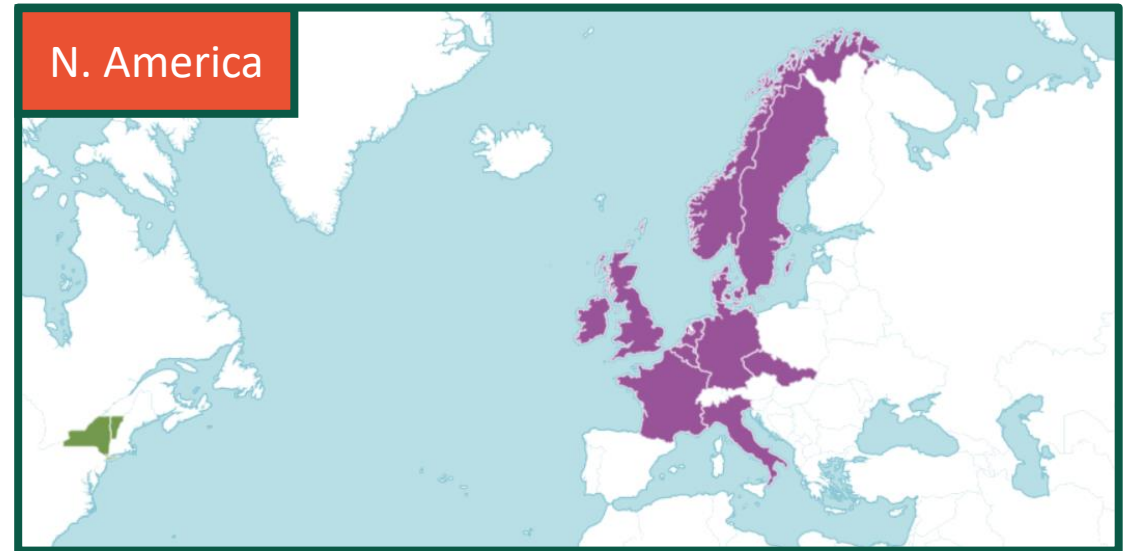


Amelanchier lamarckii

Snowy Mespilus



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Ekenitr



- Species -



Spring 

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Small Tree

Berberis darwinii

Darwin's Barberry



- Species -
x media

(Hybrid with *B. empetrifolia*)



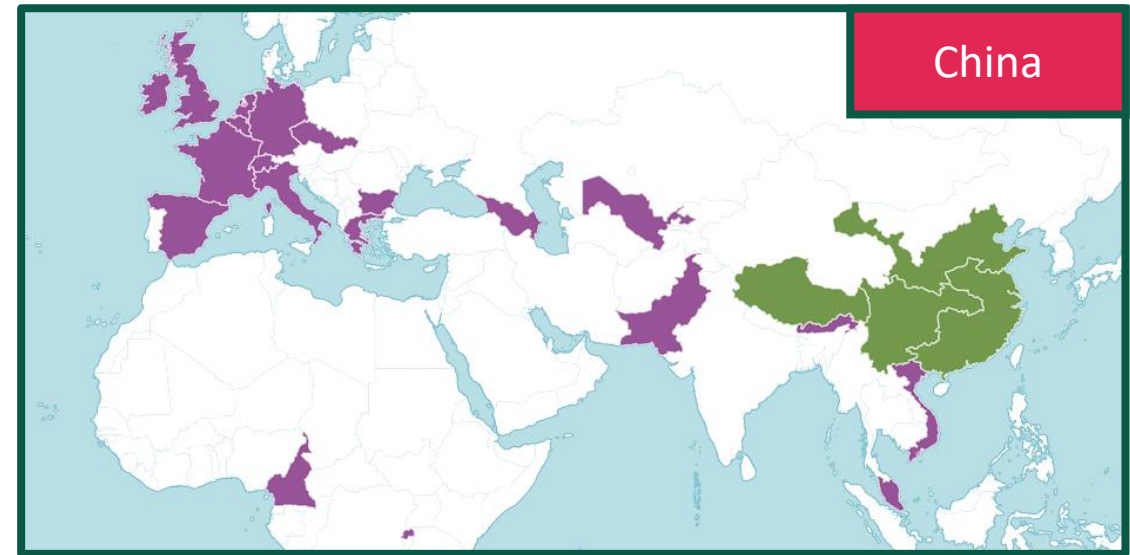
Spring 

Berberidaceae
Barberry Family

Medium Shrub

Buddleja davidii

Common Butterfly Bush



‘Black Knight’
‘Dartmoor’



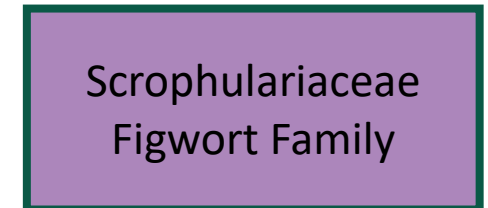
Summer ☀

Scrophulariaceae
Figwort Family

Large Shrub

Buddleja globosa

Orange-ball Butterfly Bush



Camellia japonica

Japanese Camellia



'Hagoromo'
'Pink Perfection*'



Spring 

Theaceae
Tea Family

Medium Shrub

* Fully double flowered cultivars are not good for pollinating insects so try to buy single flowers (see photo) when possible.

Ceanothus arboreus

Island Californian-Lilac



'Autumnal Blue'
'Trewithen Blue'



Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Rhamnaceae
Buckthorn Family

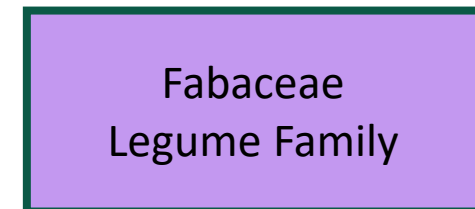
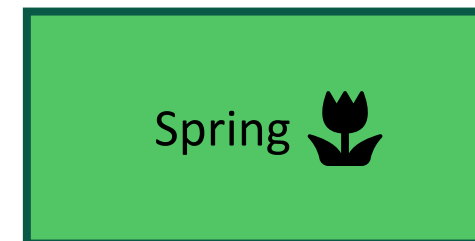
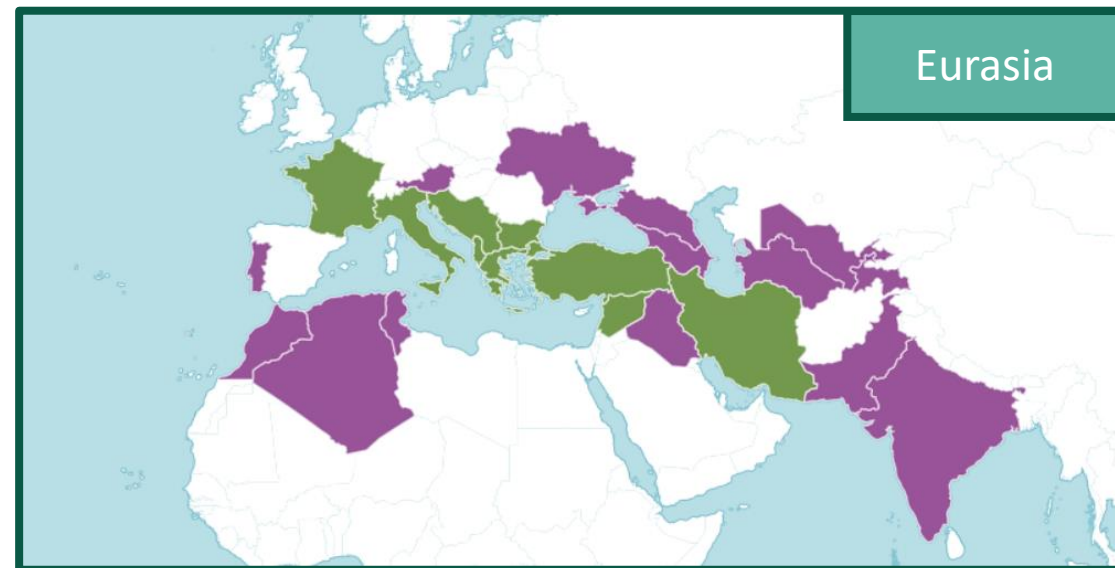
Small Tree

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Photograph from Flickr (CC) Eliot Phillips, Johnson Earls (Close-up)

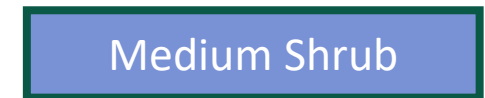
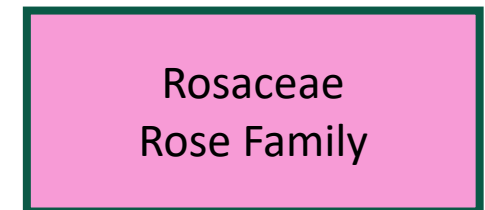
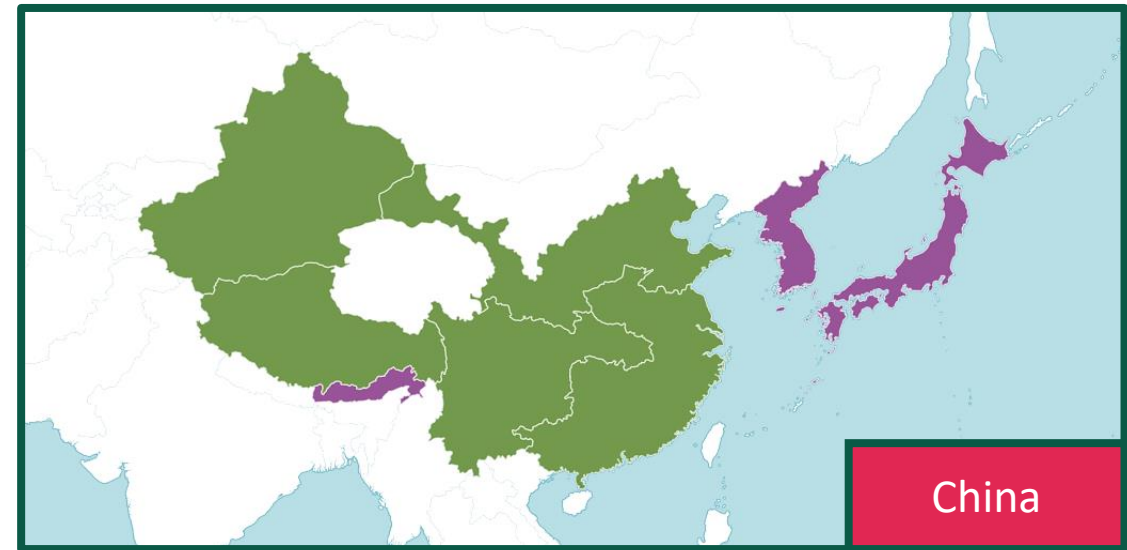
Cercis siliquastrum

Judas Tree



Chaenomeles speciosa

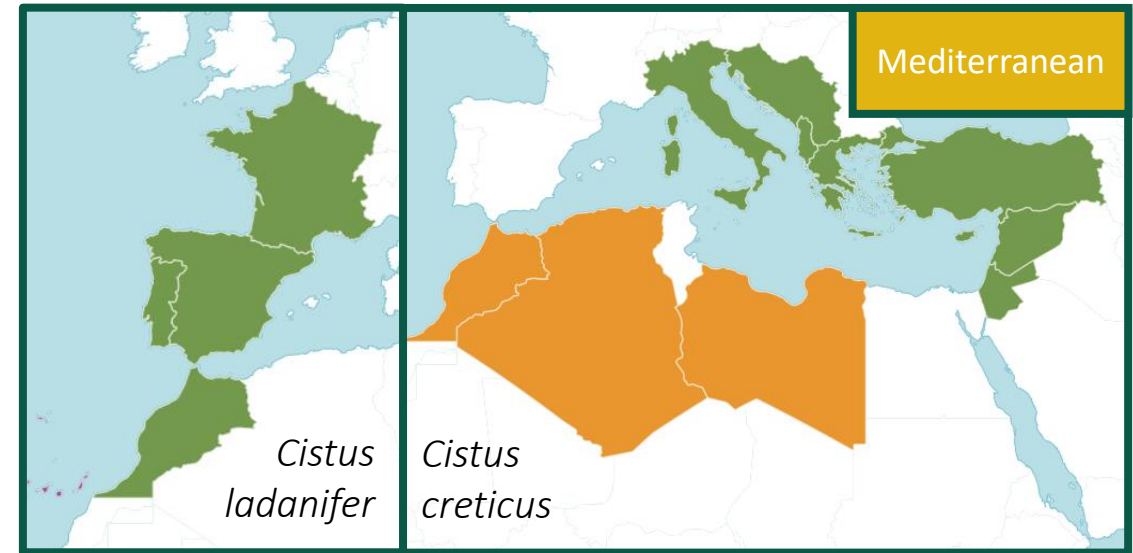
Chinese Quince



Cistus x purpureus

Purple Rock-rose

Cistus ladanifer x *Cistus creticus*



-Hybrid-
'Betty Taudevin'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Summer ☀

Cistaceae
Rock-rose Family

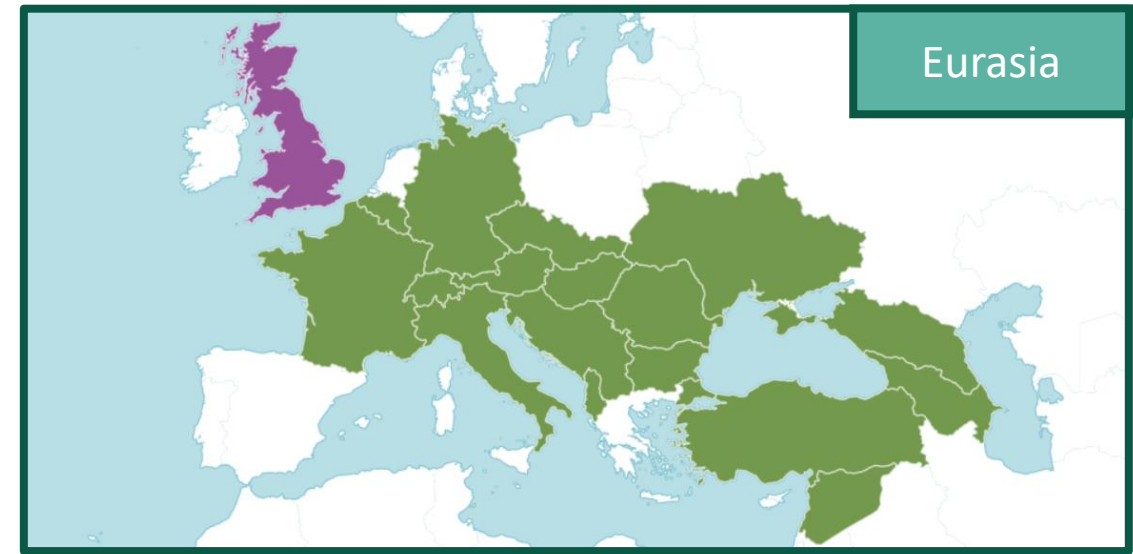
Small Shrub

Cornus mas

Cornelian-cherry



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Andreas Rockstein



'Aurea' 'Jolico'
'Golden Glory'

Late Winter
- Early Spring

Cornaceae
Dogwood Family

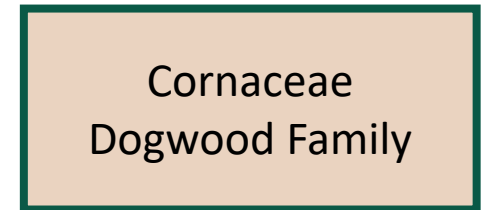
Small Tree

Cornus sanguinea

Common Dogwood

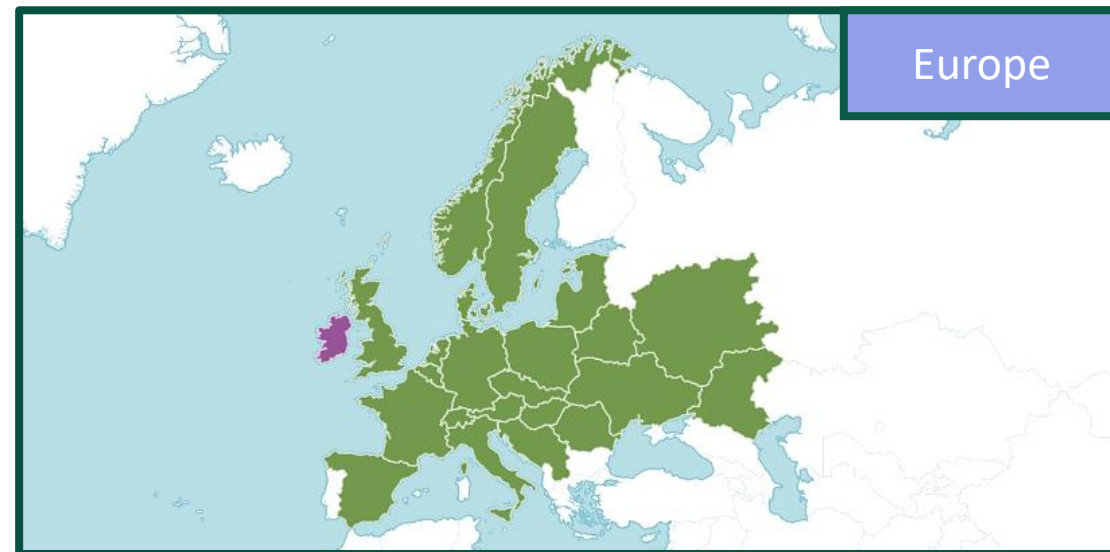


Photograph from Flickr (CC) Andreas Rockstein

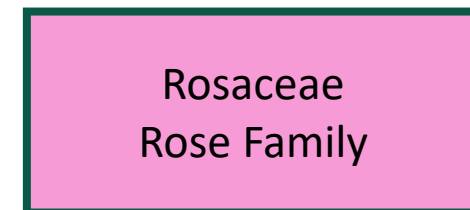


Crataegus laevigata

Midland Hawthorn



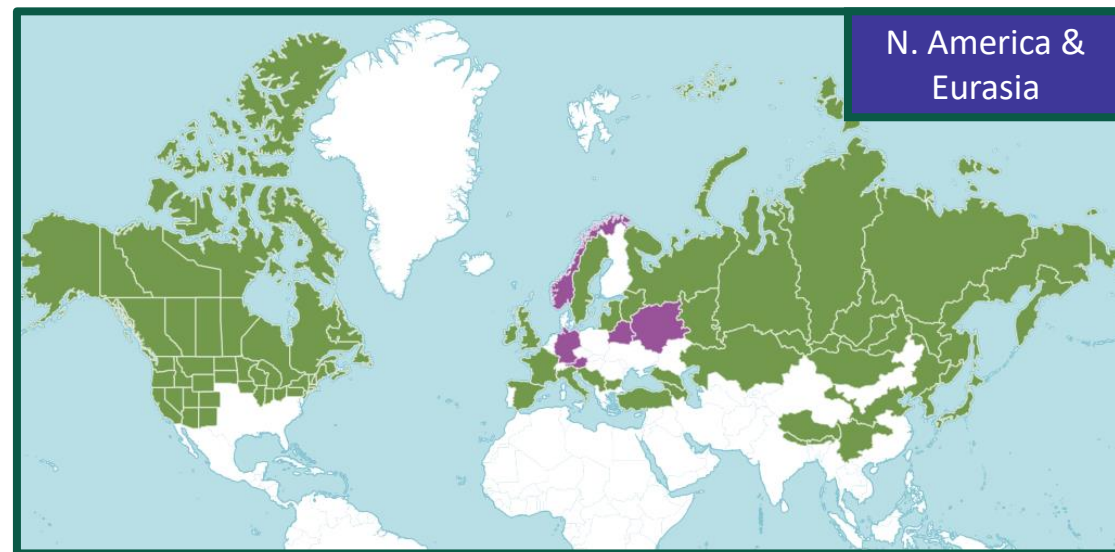
Photograph from Flickr (CC) Peter Stenzel



* Double flowered cultivars are not good for most pollinating insects so try to buy single flowers when possible

Dasiphora fruticosa

Garden Potentilla



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Irmeli Hasanen

'Chelsea Star'
'Limelight'



Early Summer
- Early Autumn

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub

Deutzia gracilis

Japanese Snow Flower



Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Hydrangeaceae
Hydrangea Family

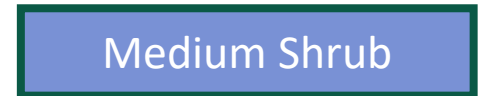
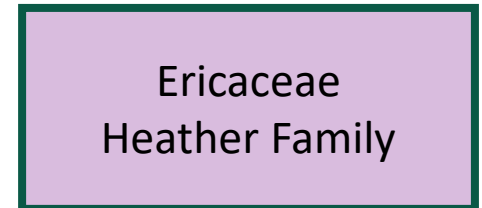
Medium Shrub

Enkianthus perulatus

Dodan-tsutsuji



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Ume 4

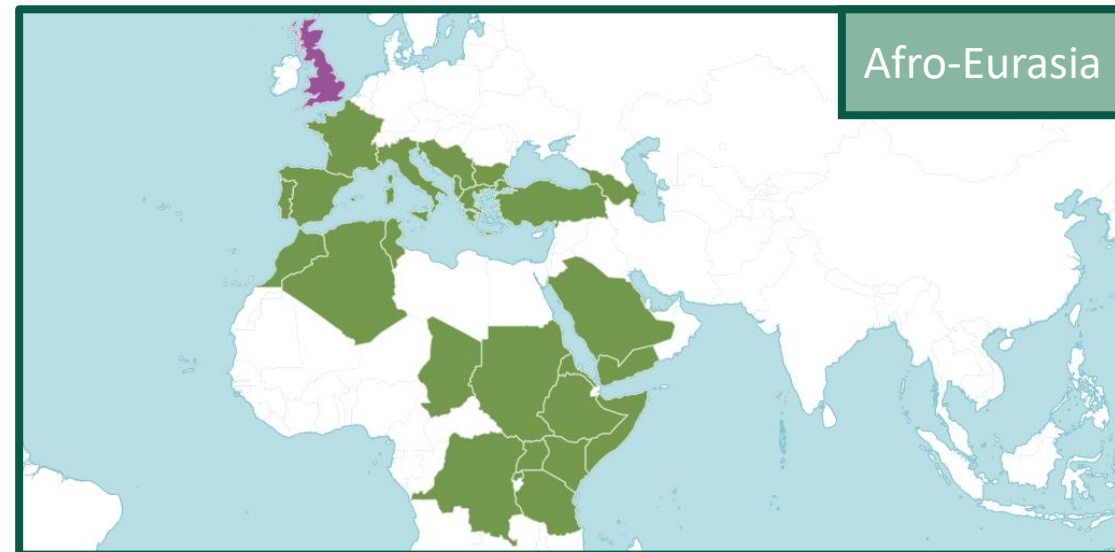


Erica arborea

Tree Heather



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Tim Waters



var. alpina
'Estrella Gold'



Spring 

Ericaceae
Heather Family

Medium Shrub

* This plant will not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

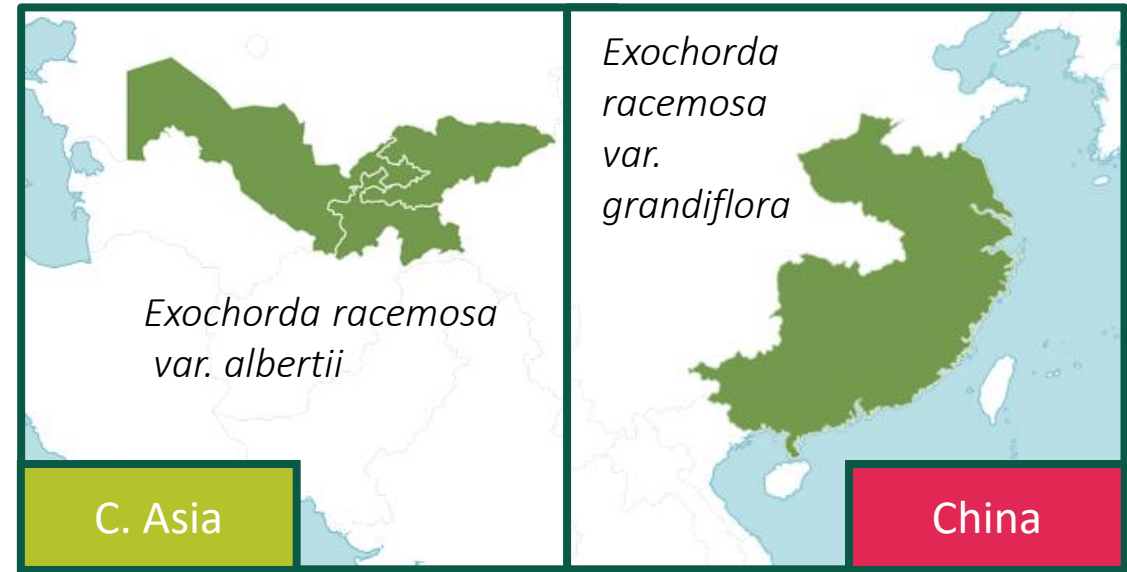
Exochorda x macrantha

Garden Pearlbush

Exochorda albertii x *Exochorda grandiflora**



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Tim Waters



'The Bride'



Late Spring
- Early Summer

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub

* The two parents were originally considered separate species due to geographic separation, however, genetic studies show they might simply be different variants of *Exochorda racemosa*

Fatsia japonica

Japanese Aralia



- Species -
'Variegata'



Autumn 

Araliaceae
Ivy Family

Medium Shrub

Hydrangea macrophylla

Large-leaf Hydrangea



Photograph from Flickr (CC) CyprusPictures



'Hanabi' 'Zorro'
'Quadricolour'



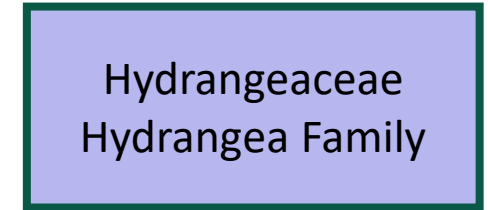
Summer ☀

Hydrangeaceae
Hydrangea Family

Medium Shrub

Hydrangea paniculata

Panicked Hydrangea



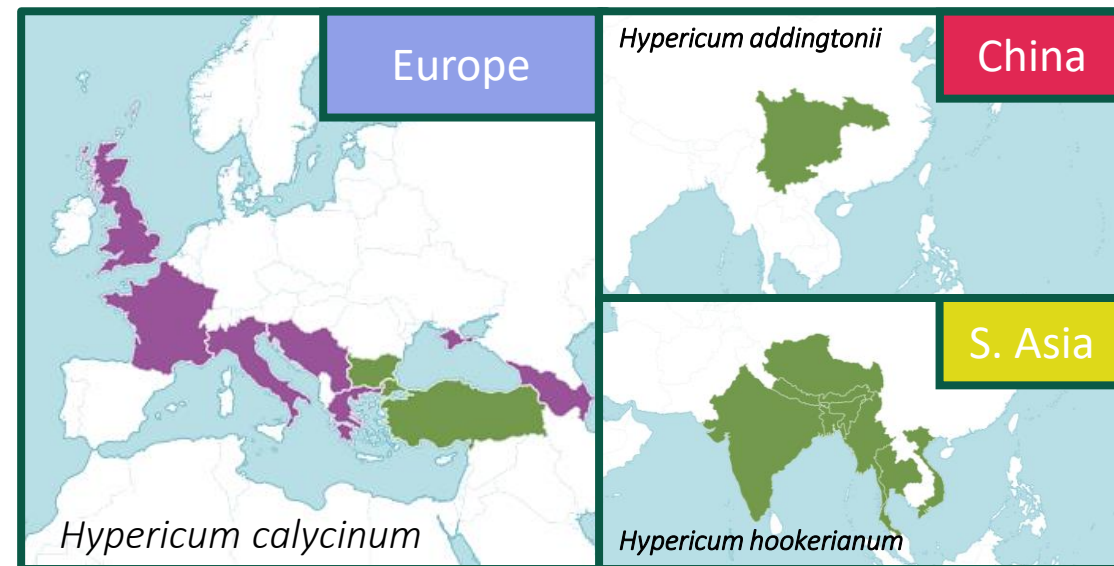
Hypericum x hidcoteense

Garden St John's Wort

Hypericum calycinum x *Hypericum x cyathiflorum**



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Allan Harris



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

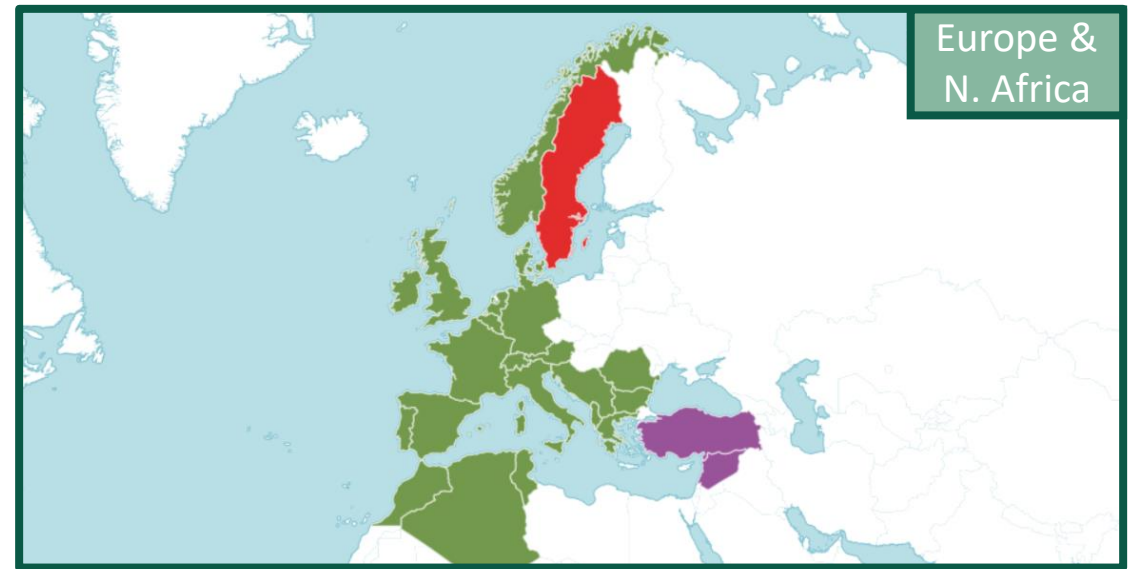
Hypericaceae
St Johns Wort Family

Medium Shrub

* *Hypericum x cyathiflorum* is a cross between *H. addingtonii* and *H. hookerianum*²²

Ilex aquifolium

European Holly



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Randi Haasken, Bjorn S (Flowers)

'Amber' 'Argentea'
'Golden Queen'

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green cup in the center of a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right is a stylized white tree icon.

Spring

A/W (Berries)

Aquifoliaceae
Holly Family

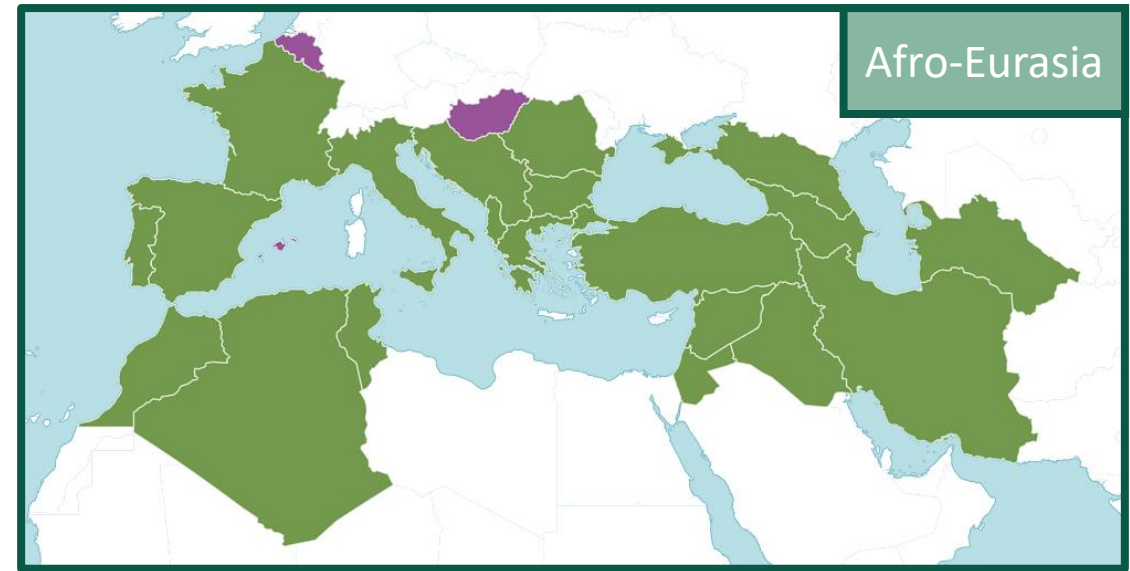
Medium Tree

Jasminum fruticans

Yellow Jasmine



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Jean-François Bousquet



None

Late Spring
- Early Summer

Oleaceae
Olive Family

Medium Shrub



Kalmia latifolia

Mountain-laurel



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Nicholas A. Torelli



'Freckles'
'Pink Charm'



Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Ericaceae
Heather Family

Medium Shrub

Kerria japonica

Japanese Marigold-bush



'Golden Guinea'
'Pleniflora*'



Late Spring
- Midsummer

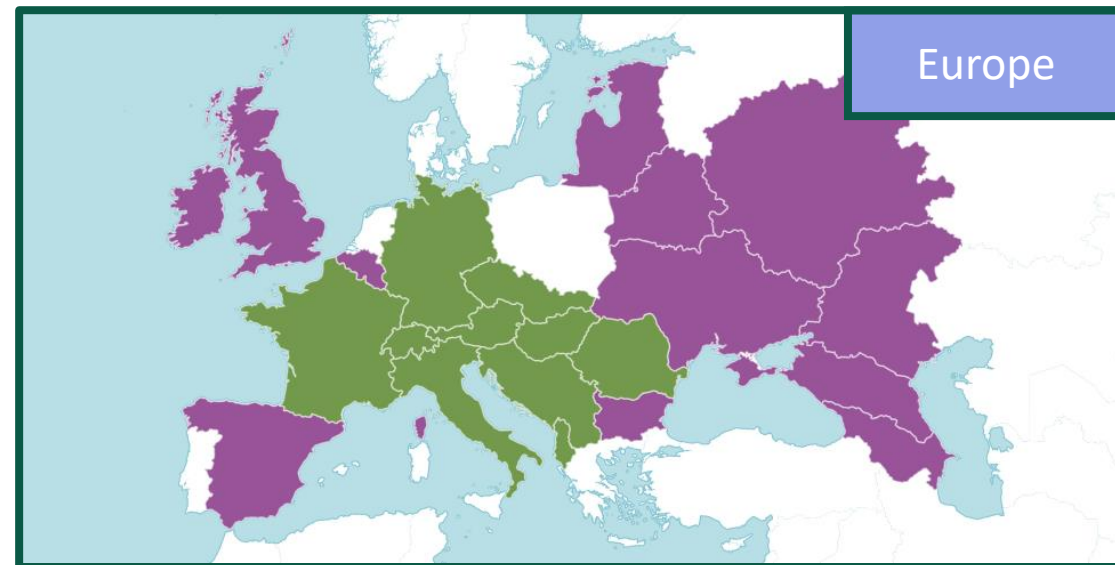
Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub

* Double flowered cultivars are not good for most pollinating insects so try to buy single flowers when possible

Laburnum anagyroides

Golden Chain



L. anagyroides x L. alpinum

Laburnum x
watereri 'Vossii'

RHS AWARD OF
GARDEN MERIT

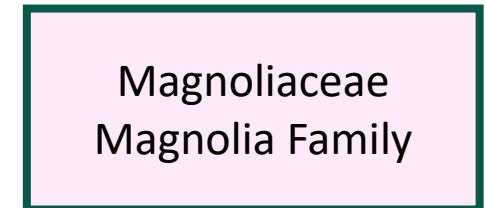
Late Spring
- Early Summer

Fabaceae
Legume Family

Medium Tree

Magnolia campbellii

Campbell's Magnolia



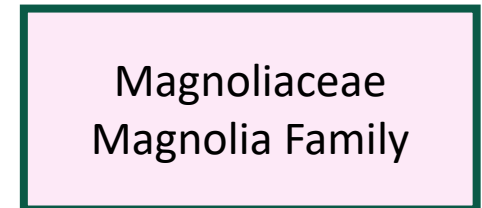
* This plant may not survive below -10°C night temperatures, protect from very harsh winter nights

Magnolia stellata

Star Magnolia

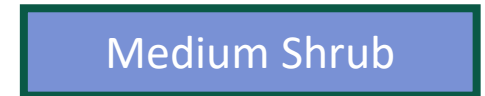
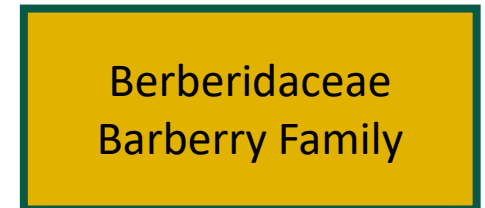


Photograph from Flickr (CC) Ting Chen



Mahonia aquifolium

Oregon Grape



Malus floribunda


Japanese Crab Apple




Photograph from Flickr (CC) Maja Dumat, Vănlap Hoàng (fruit)

- Species -

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right of the logo is a stylized white tree icon.

Spring 

Autumn  (Fruits)

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Small Tree

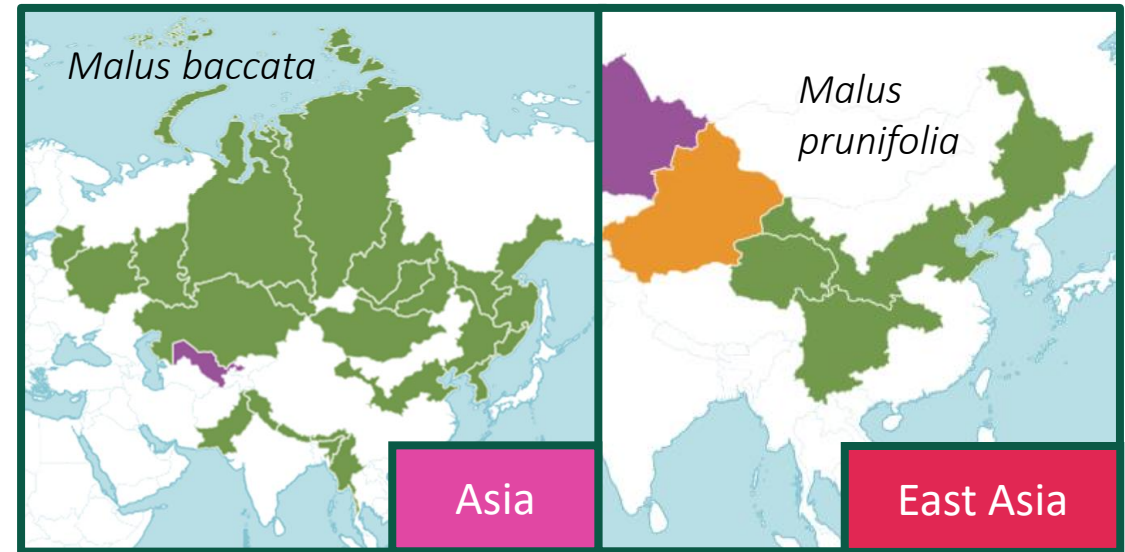
Malus x robusta


Siberian Crab Apple


Malus baccata x *Malus prunifolia*



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) Rasbak, Jubele_CZ (Fruit)



Spring 

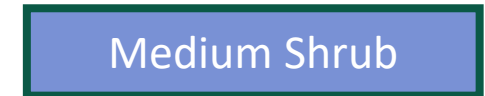
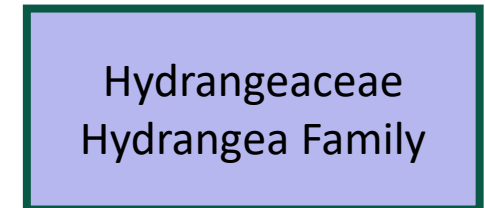
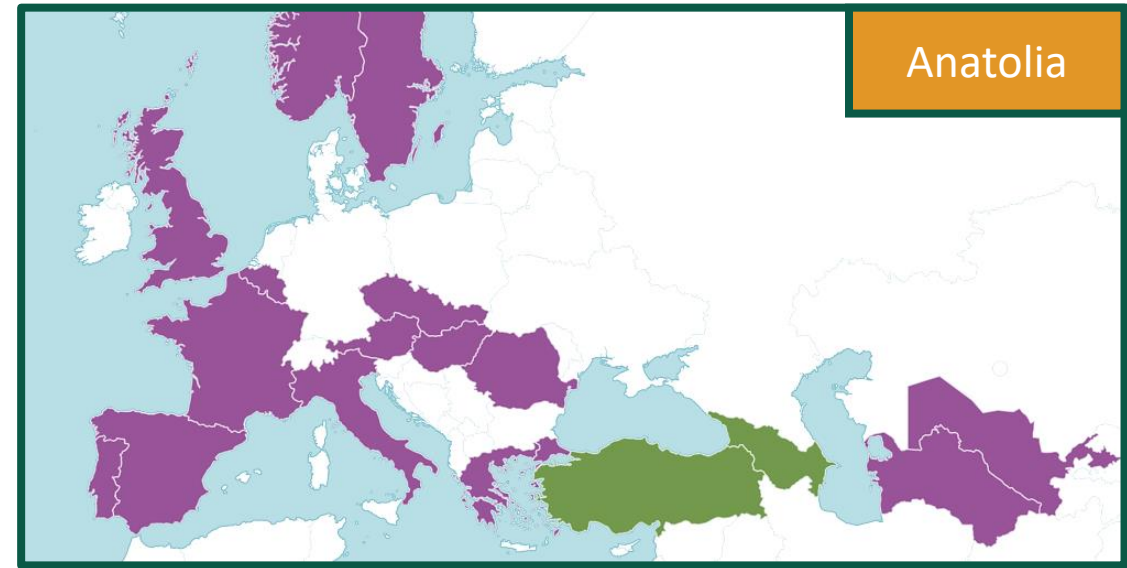
Autumn  (Fruits)

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Small Tree

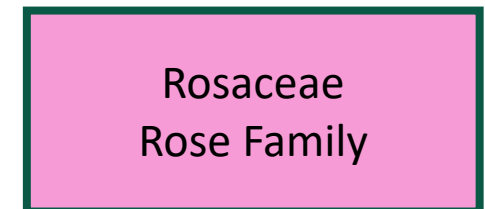
Philadelphus coronarius

Sweet Mock-orange



Prunus incisa

Fuji Cherry

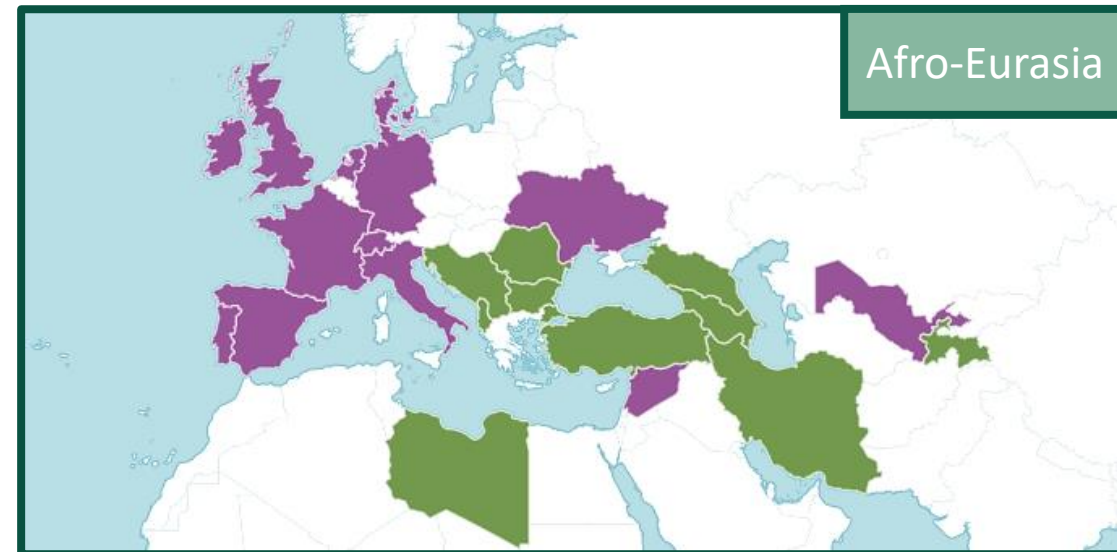


Prunus laurocerasus

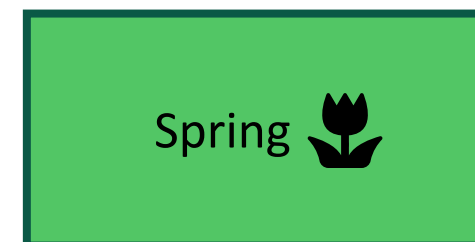
Laurel-leaved Cherry



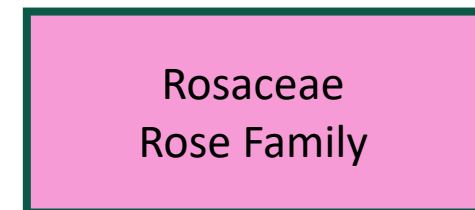
Photograph from Flickr (CC) Linda de Volder



'Otto Luyken'
'Rotundifolia'



Spring



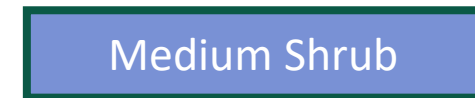
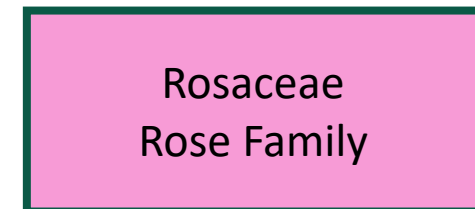
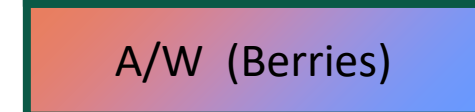
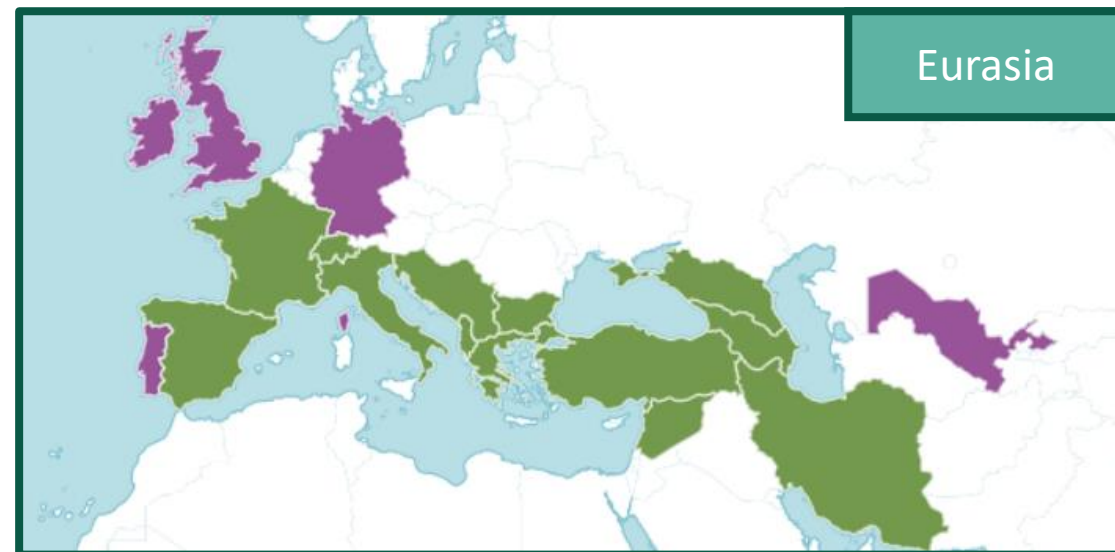
Rosaceae
Rose Family



Small Tree

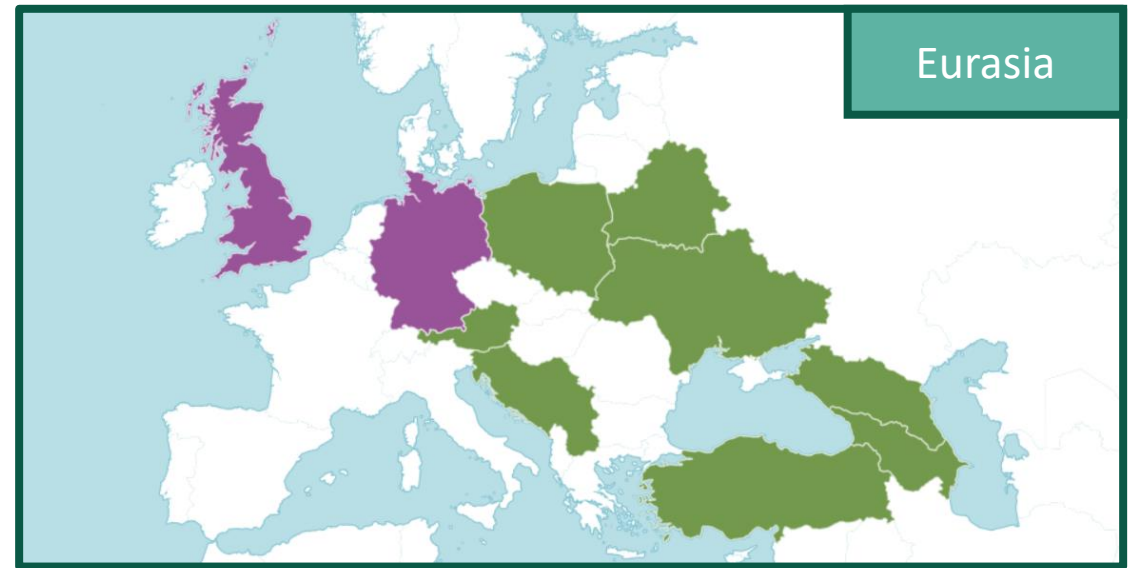
Pyracantha coccinea

Red Firethorn



Rhododendron luteum

Yellow Azalea



- Species -

(Possibly mildly invasive so AGM tentatively removed recently)



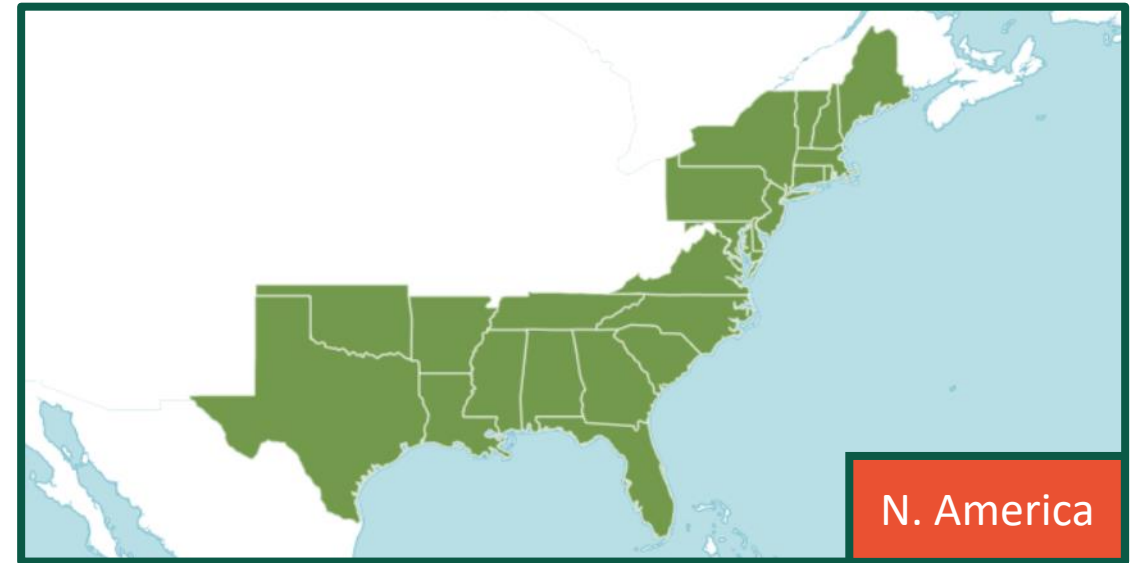
Spring 

Ericaceae
Heather Family

Large Shrub

Rhododendron viscosum

Swamp Azalea



- Species -



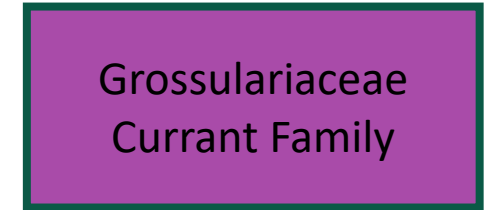
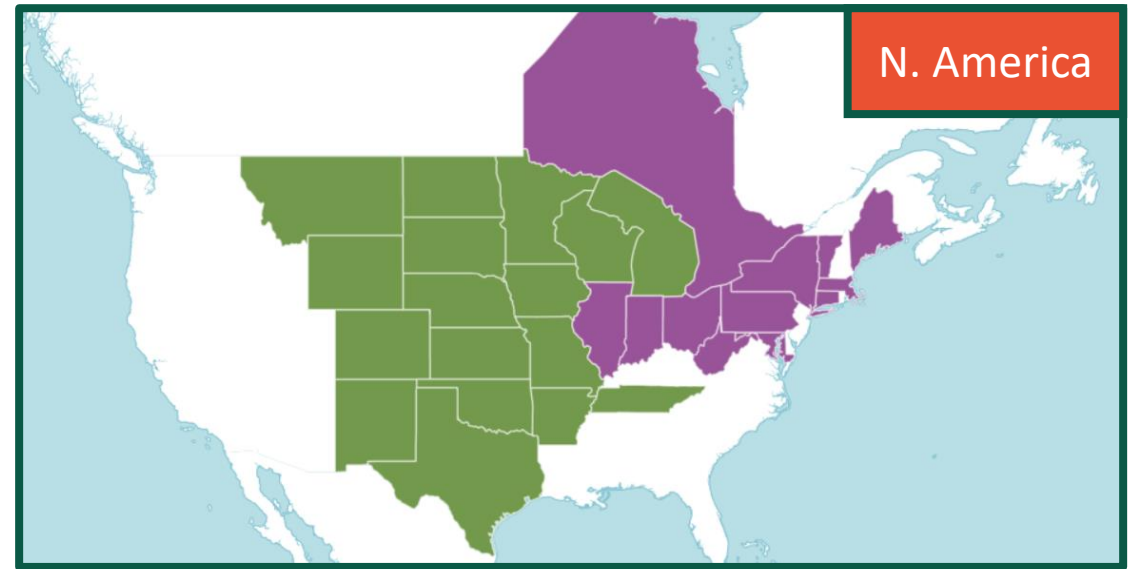
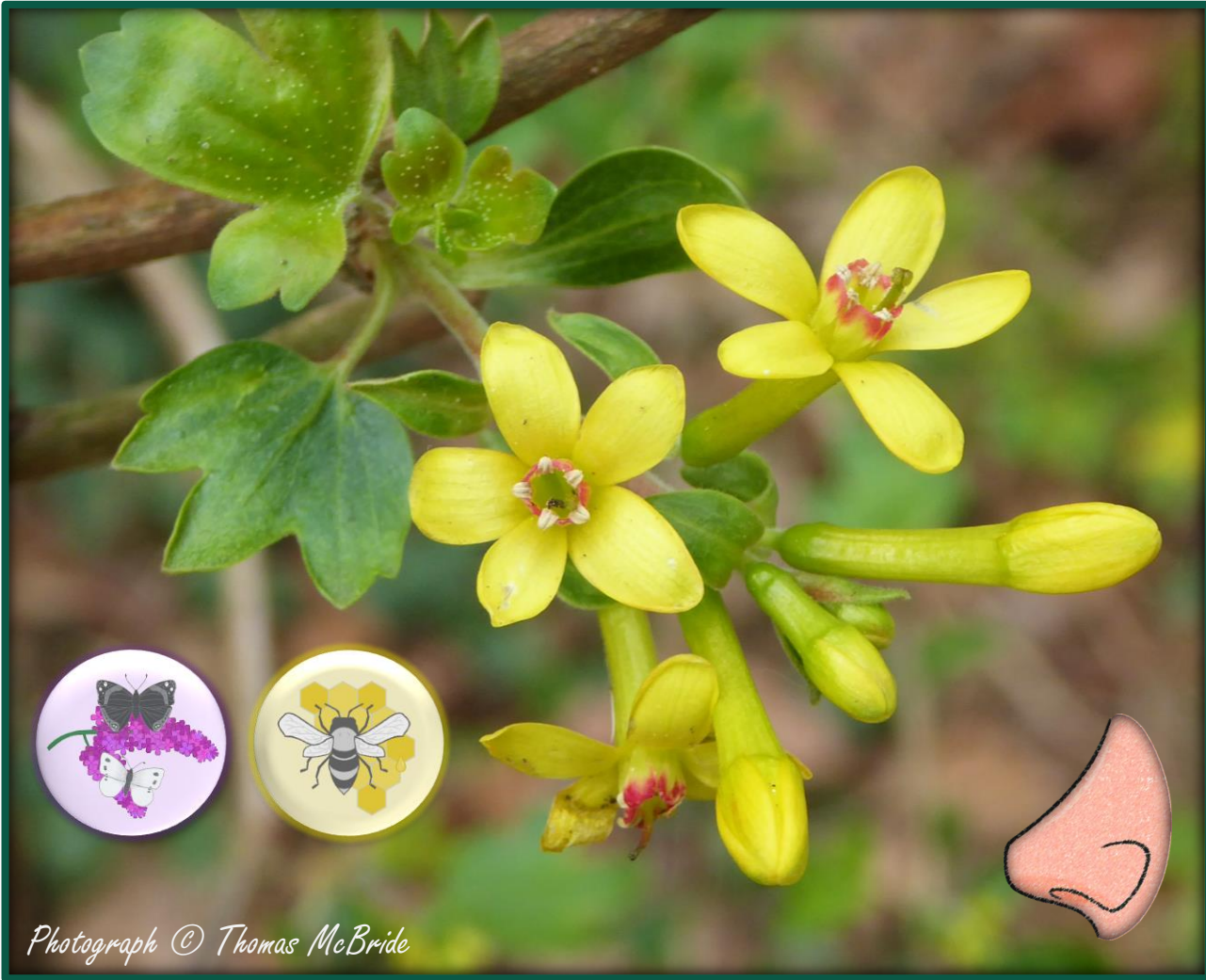
Summer ☀

Ericaceae
Heather Family

Medium Shrub

Ribes odoratum

Scented Golden Currant



Ribes sanguineum

Red-flowered Currant



Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Grossulariaceae
Currant Family

Medium Shrub

Rosa gallica

Rosa-mundi, French Rose



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Tim Waters



var. officinalis
'Versicolor'



Summer ☀

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Small Shrub

Rosa rugosa

Japanese Rose



'Fru Dagmar Hastrup'
'Scabrosa'



Midsummer
- Early Autumn

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub

Rosa xanthina

Yellow Manchu Rose



Photograph from Wikipedia (CC) T Voekler



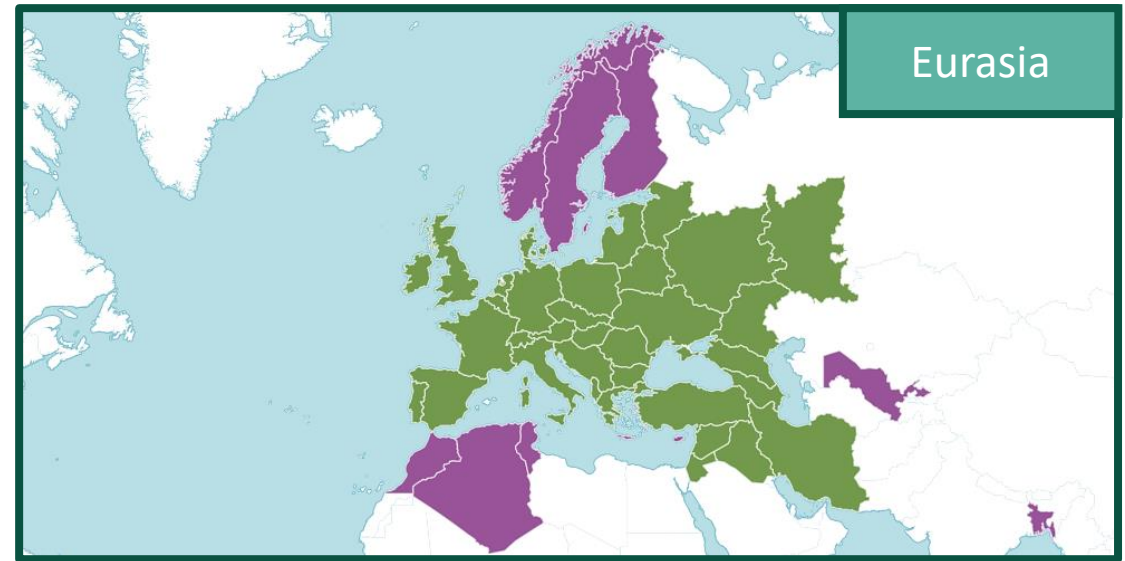
Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary Plant

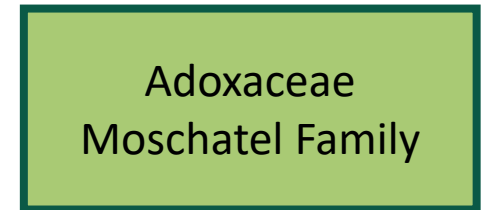


Sambucus nigra

Common Elder



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Andreas Rockstein

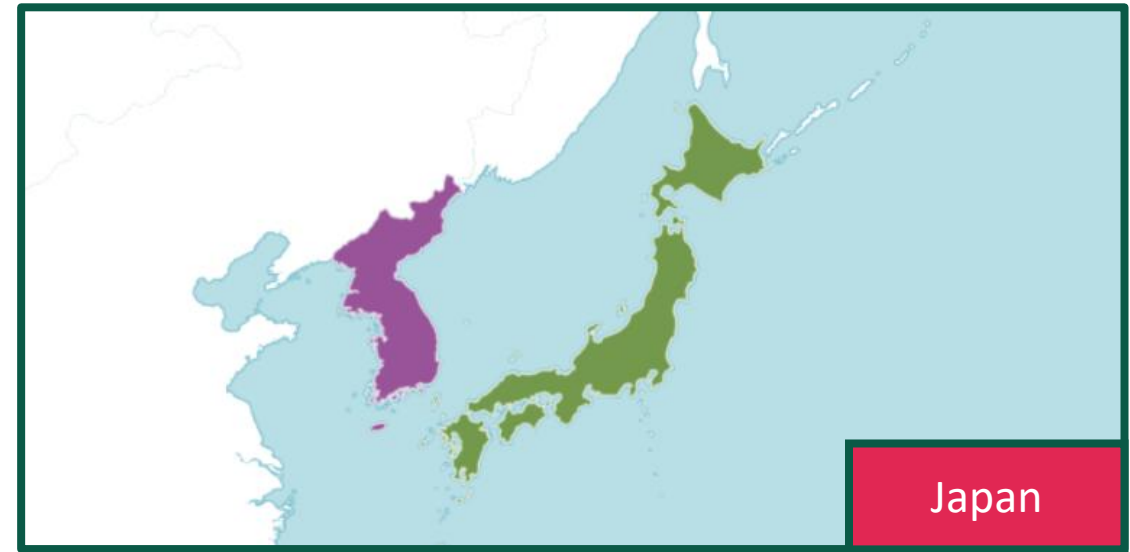


Spiraea japonica

Japanese Spiraea



Photograph from Flickr (CC) BeautifulCataya



'Candlelight'
'Dart's Red'



Summer ☀

Rosaceae
Rose Family

Medium Shrub

Stachyurus chinensis

Chinese Spiketail



Photograph © Thomas McBride

'Celina'
'Joy Forever'

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right of the logo is a stylized white tree icon.

Late Winter
- Mid Spring

Stachyuraceae
Spiketail Family

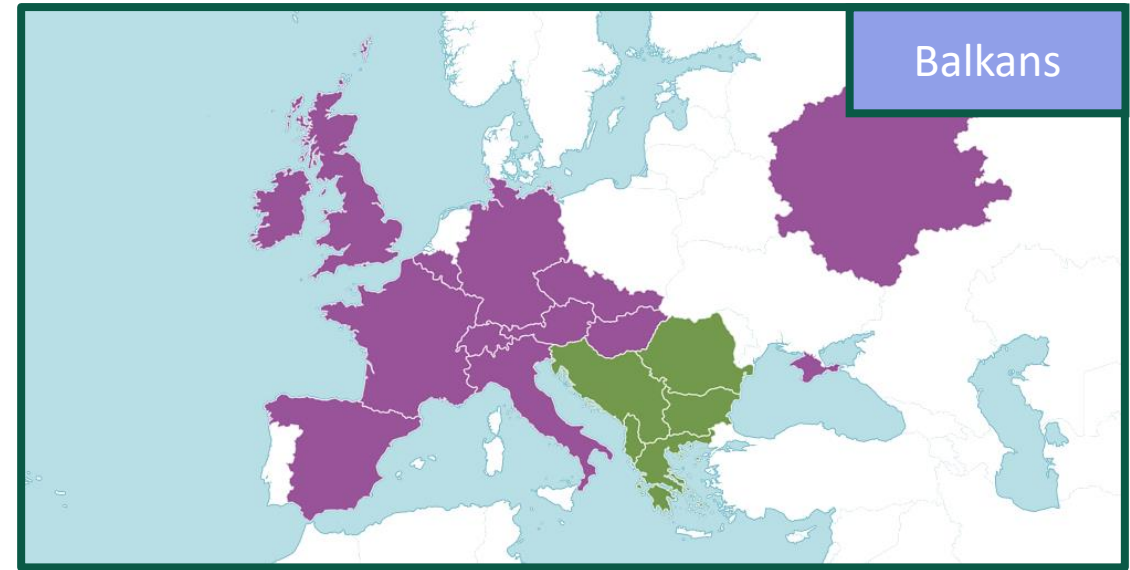
Medium Shrub

Syringa vulgaris

Common Lilac Bush



Photograph © Thomas McBride



'Primrose' 'Vestale'
'Sensation'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Mid Spring
- Early Summer

Oleaceae
Olive Family

Small Tree

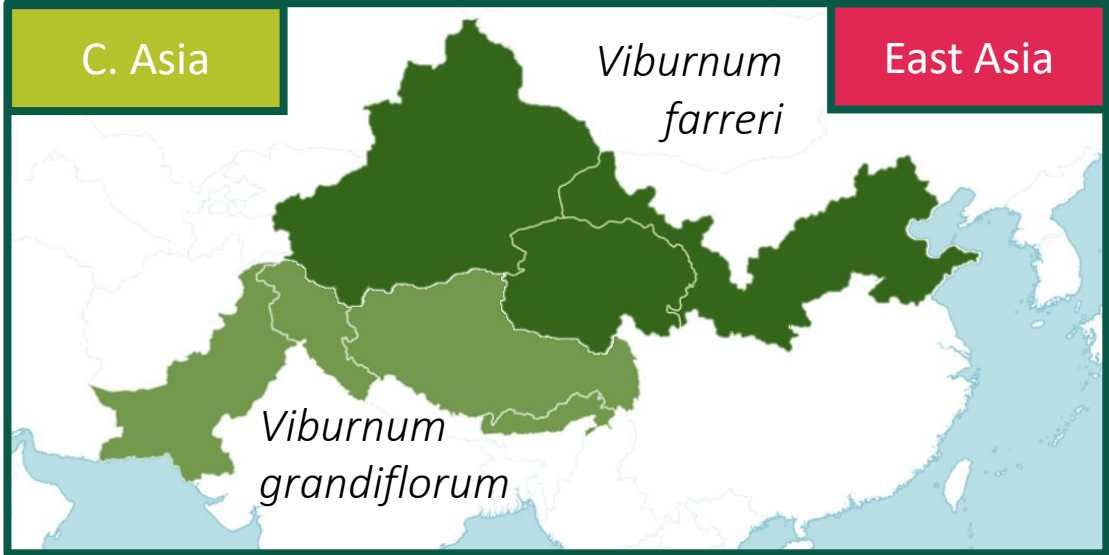
Viburnum x bodnantense

Bodnant Viburnum

Viburnum farreri x *Viburnum grandiflorum*



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Peter Stenzel



'Charles Lamont'
'Dawn' 'Deben'

RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT

Mid Autumn
- Early Spring

Adoxaceae
Moschatel Family

Large Shrub

Viburnum opulus

Guelder-rose



Photograph from Flickr (CC) Fred F

'Compactum' 'Rosea'
'Xanthocarpum'

The logo for the RHS Award of Garden Merit, featuring a green trophy cup inside a circular border with the text "RHS AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT" and a registered trademark symbol. To the right is a stylized white tree icon.

Late Spring
- Midsummer

Adoxaceae
Moschatel Family

Large Shrub