

Strawberry Tree

Arbutus spp.



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Description

Typical height:
5-7 metres

Typical width:
5-7 metres

Growth rate:
Slow

Typical form:
Small to medium-sized tree with rounded, spreading crown often growing from multiple stems.

Origin

Ireland and Southern Europe

Tolerances

Tolerant of wind and some drought once established.

Suitable under powerlines: Suitable.

Characteristics

Stiff, glossy, evergreen leaves on red-brown shoots. Leaf margins toothed. White or rosy flowers in drooping panicles occur in autumn and spring. Spherical fruits ripen to red, bearing a resemblance to strawberries.

Facts and Trivia

Fruits are edible but are rather bland and are mostly eaten by birds. Often seen to bear both flowers and fruits at the same time of year, which is relatively uncommon in the plant kingdom. *Arbutus unedo* was described by Carl Linnaeus in Volume 1 of his 1753 work *Species Plantarum*. Forms mycorrhizal relationships

with soil fungi. Inoculation with fungi has been shown to improve the plants root mass, size, tolerance to drought and nutritional status.

Arbutus unedo grows from a lignotuber (like eucalypts) so shoots will continue to grow after above ground disturbance such as fire.