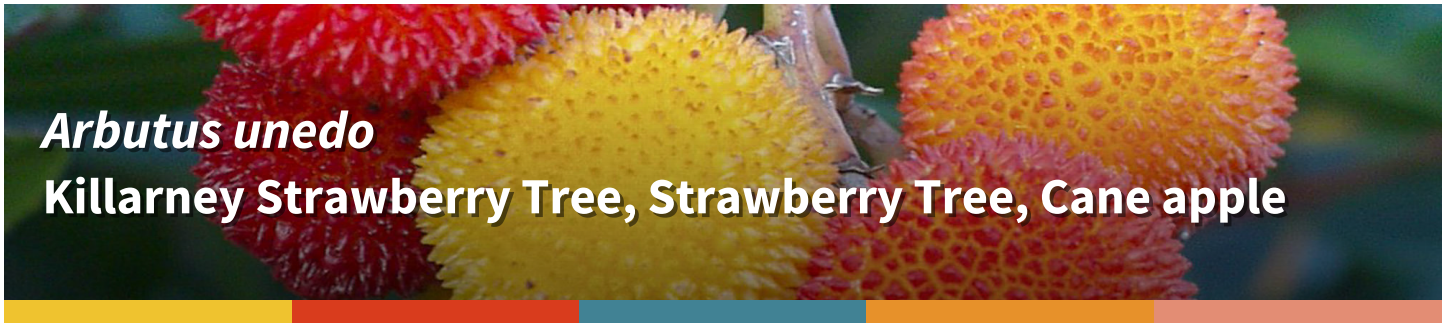


Arbutus unedo
Killarney Strawberry Tree, Strawberry Tree, Cane apple



Arbutus unedo (Strawberry tree) is a small to medium sized tree, often multistemmed shrub with evergreen foliage and was described by Carl Linneus in his Species Plantarum in 1753. In its native habitats around the Mediteranean sea it is growing in dry and sunny scrublands together with other shrubby species, such as *Myrtus communis*, *Cistus incanus* and *Pistacia lentiscus*. The strawberry tree can reach about ten to twelve metres high when conditions are favourable, however mostly forming a low, dense shrub.

Leaves of *Arbutus unedo* are oblonged, thick and waxy, gently serrated on the margins. Flowers are born in pendulous clusters with creamy white ericaceaous flowers, which are providing nectar for late populations of bees and many other insects as it is flowering and ripening its red, strawberry like fruits at the same time in October-November. The fruits are sweet and tasty, the small seeds are distributed by birds as they are highly attracted to eat them. The bark is less ornamental than on *Arbutus andrachne*, greyish-brown, flaking in small pieces.

The relatively slow growing strawberry tree has a long lifespan and could be highly beneficial for wildlife not only as a source of nectar and nutritious fruits but also as a dense evergreen for shelter. This is a highly versatile and useful species for the changing climate, that grows on any well drained soil, even in high rainfall areas. *Arbutus unedo* is tolearant of pollution, heat, drought, strong winds and salt spray on coastal locations. It has an underground organ, called a lignotuber, which enables it to resprout from ground level after a case of fire or severly cold weather. It is suitable for smaller to larger gardens, public parks, urban plantings and edible gardens.

TYPES OF PLANTING
Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, solitary shrubs

USE
Location: park, in containers, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones, coastal area | **Pavement**: none, open | **Planting concepts**: food forest, urban planting

CHARACTERISTICS
Crown shape: rounded, egg-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 10 - 12 m | **Width**: 6 - 8 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 7B - 9B

ASPECTS
Wind: tolerant to wind, tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: very dry, dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, butterflies, birds | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness, tolerates air pollution, tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN
Flowers: raceme, bell-shaped, discrete, pendulous, small | **Flower colour**: white, white-pink, pink | **Flowering period**: October - December | **Leaf colour**: dark green | **Leaves**: evergreen, ovoid, lanceolate, thick, leathery , polished, serrate | **Fruits**: striking, large, plum | **Fruit colour**: orange-red | **Bark colour**: cinnamon-brown, dark brown | **Bark**: peeling, smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour**: brown | **Twigs**: bare | **Root system**: shallow, fine roots

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