

# Chimonanthus praecox

## Winter sweet



*Chimonanthus praecox* (Winter sweet, melon tree) is native to China, in the mountains of east Sichuan, north-east Chongqing, north-west Hunan and north-west Hubei, up to a height of 3,000 metres. This plant was introduced in Europe by the English in 1766, but they were not the first. The Arabs had taken the shrub with them from China long before that. This can be seen from the *Chimonanthus* shrubs one finds in almost all Moresque gardens in Spain, like the Alhambra. Winter sweet grows into a wide, vase-shaped, multi-stem shrub 2 to 3 metres high.

From December onwards, *Chimonanthus praecox* blooms light-yellow flowers that stand out with their deliciously sweet scent. In the rest of the year, the rough long leaves offer a lovely background for e.g. permanent plant borders. In autumn, the winter sweet has a bright-yellow autumn colour. From the age of 5, it bears large, urn-shaped fruit with coffee bean-like seeds.

For a rich bloom, the shrub prefers a sunny environment, sheltered from wind, but *Chimonanthus praecox* can also tolerate light shade. A dry summer will make for better buds for the flowers. The Winter sweet prefers moist, nutrient-rich and permeable soil, but also tolerates dryness and heat. The species is an unknown, but easily usable and entirely winter-hardy, multi-stem shrub for gardens. But *Chimonanthus* will also enrich the range in parks with its winter blooms and delicious accompanying fragrance.

### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

### USE

**Location:** park, central reservation, in containers, large garden, small garden, patio, cemetery | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** urban planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** wide vase-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 2.5 - 3 m | **Width:** 2.5 - 3 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 6A - 9B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** moist | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** bell-shaped, striking, pendulous, flower-scented | **Flower colour:** daffodil, dark red | **Flowering period:** December - March | **Leaf colour:** green | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovate, lanceolate, polished | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** striking, large, capsule | **Fruit colour:** brown | **Bark colour:** grey-brown | **Bark:** slightly furrowed | **Twig colour:** brown | **Twigs:** bare | **Root system:** extensive, tap root

