

Mespilus germanica
Common Medlar, Dutch Medlar



Mespilus germanica (medlar) is a large shrub or small (multi-stem) tree which is found in a range extending from Southern Europe to Western Asia and the Caucasus where it grows on the edge of woodland and in transparent forests. The medlar has also naturalised further north and become established in these areas thanks to human activity since the seventh century. *Mespilus germanica* is, therefore, officially classed as belonging to the archaeophytes. In optimum growth conditions - on moist and fertile soils - the medlar develops into a multi-stem tree six metres tall and the same in width, with an irregularly rounded and dense crown. On account of its relatively slow growth, the medlar takes on a capricious appearance and does not readily lend itself to usage as an upright avenue tree.

Mespilus germanica produces striking whitish pink, rose-like flowers at the end of May and in early June which form a source of nectar and pollen for bees and butterflies. The brown, decorative medlar fruits which appear in the autumn stay on the tree for a long time and are only edible once they have been frozen. Then they are 'bletted', i.e., as rotten as a medlar. Birds and small mammals love them. The oblong, slightly hairy leaf emerges fresh green with a grey-green underside, changes to a matt dark green in the summer and in the autumn the medlar puts on a spectacular display, with foliage ranging from orangey yellow to bronze red. The stems are grey, smooth and start to peel as the tree ages; twigs are downy and spiny.

Mespilus germanica is both hardy and heat-resistant and copes reasonably well with drought. The tree tolerates many different soil types, including chalky soils. This makes the medlar highly suited to a diverse range of locations: from the most natural sites in landscapes to more urban settings such as parks, (small) gardens, roofs and containers. *Mespilus germanica* is often even used in food forests.

SEASONAL COLOURS

jan feb mar apr mei jun jul aug sep okt nov dec

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, half-stem trees, multi-stemmed trees, climate trees, characteristic trees, fruit trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem**: vase, multi-stem umbrella, multi-stem roof-trained, espalier | **Topiary**: espalier

USE

Location: park, central reservation, in containers, roof garden, large garden, small garden, cemetery, countryside, ecological zone | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: Climate planting, food forest, Eco planting, Landscape planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: flattened spherical | **Crown structure**: dense | **Height**: 4 - 6 m | **Width**: 4 - 6 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 5B - 9B

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, butterflies, birds, small mammals, humans, nectar value 3, pollen value 3 | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: striking, singular | **Flower colour**: white | **Flowering period**: May - June | **Leaf colour**: matt green, buds pale green, underside grey-green | **Leaves**: deciduous, ovoid, lanceolate, matt polished, hairy | **Autumn colour**: yellow-brown, yellow-orange, bronze-red | **Fruits**: striking, edible, large | **Fruit colour**: brown | **Bark colour**: grey | **Bark**: furrowed | **Twig colour**: grey-brown | **Twigs**: slightly thorned, hairy, with lenticels, thickly branched | **Root system**: deep, compact

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