



BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS

Fam. Buxaceae

DESCRIPTION

Evergreen bushy plant characterised by very slow growth. Grown for ornamental purposes in pots and gardens, this plant is also widely used in topiary.

LEAVES

Persistent, opposite, sessile or with short petioles, the leaves are ovoid and shiny dark-green above, paler below, with a smooth margin except for the apex; they release a scent when rubbed.

FRUITS

In summer, spherical berries appear between the branches containing many small dark seeds that, when fully ripe, can be projected quite far.

HABITAT

The origins of this plant are ancient. It is an indigenous shrub in the Mediterranean basin and Boreal Africa; this species is widespread in Europe, western Asia and northern Africa, with a distributional area centred in the Mediterranean basin.

DISTRIBUTION

In Italy, it grows spontaneously in the arid and rocky mountainous and sub-mountainous regions of the Alps and central northern Apennines. It prefers arid, rocky, mainly calcareous areas up to high altitudes.

FLOWERS

Scented straw-yellow flowers, bundled in small groups, appearing in spring. They are unisexual, small, gathered in axillary glomeruli. The plant generally blooms from March to May.

ROOTS

Robust root system.

BARK

Smooth and greenish in young specimens, it turns whitish-grey over time; it also has medicinal properties.

INTERESTING FACTS

Boxwood was used in the Middle Ages to make compass housings. The Etruscans used it for crafting wind instruments. Buxus is commonly known as box, dudgeon or common boxwood.

