



Pest problems

Laurus nobilis is an exceptionally trouble-free plant. Occasionally it may become an unwilling victim of attack by Scale Insect or Bay Sucker.

SCALE INSECT:

Limpet shaped brown waxy scales cling to the undersides of foliage (often either side of the mid-rib), and also along young stems. Persistent infestations weaken growth and make plants unsightly.

Spray with Bug Clear concentrate or Bug Clear Gun!* at weekly intervals, for three applications, to eradicate persistent adults and active young. Ensure plants are well watered during treatment as this will help with its effectiveness.

BAY SUCKER:

Signs of attack appear in late spring and early summer, causing leaf edges to pale, thicken and curl under (harbouring sucker nymphs). Nymphs secrete white woolly wax and honeydew which encourages sooty mould - all tell-tale signs!

Spray with Bug Clear concentrate or Bug Clear Gun!* in early May to kill adults before they lay their eggs; and repeat one month later. Control is difficult once the nymphs have hatched, as they are protected by curled leaves and waxy coating.

* Always read and follow manufacturers instructions carefully.

caring for...

caring for... **Laurus** Nobilis

Laurus Nobilis

Haskins Ferndown

Longham, Ferndown
Dorset BH22 9DJ
Tel: 01202 591919

Haskins West End

Mansbridge Road, Gaters Hill
West End, Southampton SO18 3HW
Tel: 023 8047 2324

Haskins Roundstone

Roundstone Bypass, Angmering
West Sussex BN16 4BD
Tel: 01903 777666

Haskins Snowhill

Snowhill Lane, Copthorne
West Sussex RH10 3EY
Tel: 01342 712545



Laurus nobilis



HASKINS
for garden pleasure



HASKINS
for garden pleasure



caring for... Laurus Nobilis

The Bay Tree

Laurus nobilis originates in the Mediterranean, where its history is steeped in heroic tradition and victory. The name *Laurus* comes from the Latin 'Laud' meaning "praise", pertaining to its use by Romans to crown victorious conquerors.

Its popularity as a culinary herb has only added to its value. As an important ingredient of sweet and savoury recipes in European cuisine, it has become essential in bouquet garni, soups, stews and desserts.

Through generations, *Laurus nobilis* has been used to treat indigestion, poor appetite, colic and wind. And externally for rheumatism, sprains, bruises, ulcers, scabies and dandruff! The leaves even had their uses as weevil deterrents, packed around dried figs and liquorice in transit.

These days Bay Trees are more commonly seen gracing patios and herb gardens or standing guard either side of a grand entrance.

Characteristics

A large evergreen, conical shrub or small tree with glossy, aromatic, dark green leaves ('Aurea' has bright yellow foliage). In spring, clusters of tiny creamy yellow flowers appear, followed by small black berries on female plants. Plants are not fussy about soil so long as drainage is good. However, a warm, sheltered, sunny position is essential, especially while young. They make ideal plants for coastal areas, clipped as topiary specimens or excellent hedging for mild regions. Height and spread in very sheltered areas of 12m x 10m (40 x 30ft), but usually much smaller in British gardens.

Cultivation

Choose a sunny corner of the garden as a home for your Bay Tree. Poor, stony soil is not a problem. Simply incorporate Multi Purpose compost when planting. Provide a supportive stake for 'standard' varieties to prevent permanent damage by strong winds. Keep well watered during dry spells until the plant is thoroughly established (18 months +).

Training as topiary

Clip into shape in summer, using secateurs or scissors to avoid damaging the foliage. To maintain a really neat out-line an additional trim the following spring is advisable.



Growing a standard

A well-grown standard Bay can make an immediate impact in a formal garden or in a pot on the patio. Two matching standards look dramatic, carefully positioned either side of an important entrance way.

It takes several years to train a standard Bay from scratch to maturity. During this time it must have regular watering, feeding and excellent growing conditions.

Choose a young plant with a vigorous, unbroken central stem. Stake from the outset, keeping the main stem perfectly straight, until the desired height is reached.

Half Standard – 1-1.5m / 3-5ft of clear stem.

Full Standard – 2m / 6ft+ of clear stem.

Shorten side shoots as they form, leaving just a few cm of growth attached. They will provide valuable food production sites, boosting growth and encouraging a stronger stem. (These can be cut away at a later date when a bushy "head" has developed.) Any foliage should also remain for similar reasons. Repot frequently and feed weekly with a soluble plant food, such as Miracle-Gro Plant Food, or just once a year with Miracle-Gro Controlled Release Plant Food and water as normal. If you have a cool greenhouse or conservatory, consider overwintering your young Bay inside to accelerate its growth.

Depending on the final height and vigour of your Bay Tree, train the leader 30cm (12") beyond the required height before pinching out the growing point. This will encourage dormant buds below the tip to develop and send out bushy new shoots to form the "head" of the standard. Pinch these back occasionally to ensure a denser shape.



Laurus nobilis in flower

Harvesting leaves

A warm airing cupboard makes an ideal area for drying many herbs. Place whole leaves or branches in paper bags or on trays and allow to dry naturally for 24-48 hours before removing to air tight containers for storage. Over-drying can cause loss of flavour and deterioration, so speed is of the essence.