

## Michelia champaca – Joy Tree

Commonly known as the Joy tree, *Michelia champaca* is a native to South East Asia, primarily Indonesia and India. A tropical evergreen that is hardy to about  $-1^{\circ}\text{C}$ , *Michelia champaca* is the natural source of the Joy perfume, the most expensive perfume fragrance in the world.

A highly attractive and fragrant species, it is a tree that can reach 12 to 20m in cultivation, with a smooth bark, large ovate green leaves and attractive fragrant yellow blooms produced in profusion in the Spring.

This species should be grown in well-drained, humus-rich, neutral to acid soil. Choose a location receiving direct light or partial shade and prune after flowering to control their size, however, they look their best when left large and full.

### Propagation

Propagation is from seed or from ripe wood cuttings in the Summer months. Seed requires no pre-treatment for germination but is faster and more reliable when conducted at a temperature of at least  $23^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Planting out can be at any time in a greenhouse or frost-free area but only after the danger of frost has passed in cooler areas. Plant out in a well-drained sunny position in a good rich soil.

In cooler areas it may be advisable to maintain seedlings in pots for the first year to allow them to attain some size before planting out.