

Hop Bush, Hopwood, shath

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: fast growing
Humidity	: very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: very high (7000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -9°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub
Height	: 1 m-5 m
Spread	: 2 m-4 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: light green
Size	: 0.3 cm
Period	: May - June

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 2 cm

This medium to tall shrub occurs with many foliage variations throughout the tropics and is also widespread in southwestern Saudi Arabia, where it is often seen on the edge of wadis as an erect shrub with its bright foliage. Its Arabic name is shath. Not grazed by animals, its leaves have medicinal properties for treating rheumatism and wounds. The lush green creates an accent in an arid landscape, as a contrast to grey-leaved plants. The bronze-purple leafed variety 'Purpurea' from Australia is also attractive with an intense, rich colour in winter. Unfortunately, it can be less hardy to frost in Arriyadh than the green-leaved species. The insignificant, small flowers without petals are borne in racemes after spring rains, and also throughout the year. The pollen has a strong odour at a close distance. Pinkish fruits are attractive in the autumn. Dodonea is a versatile shrub that is often irregular in shape. It can, however, be planted in formal gardens and clipped as a hedge or into geometrical shapes. At the same time, as a xerophyte, it is also drought-resistant and at home in a desert situation, where it evokes the atmosphere of a wadi bed, when planted in run-off channels. Best in full sun, it will tolerate shade, but it does have the disadvantage that its greedy lateral and deep roots will take the water from other plants nearby. Overwatering should be avoided.

