

Tree Profile: *Lavendar Star - Grewia occidentalis*

General information: *Grewia occidentalis* - Lavender Star or Crossberry is a small, hardy, attractive tree - irregularly tiered, upright habit and is indigenous to Southern Africa. There can be more than 400 different species found around the world. The genus is named after the botanist Nehemiah Grew. It's partially evergreen and deciduous and mainly found in Africa, Asia as well as Australia.

The main attractions are the starry mauve to lilac flowers in summer, followed by distinctive four-lobed reddish berries (crossberry) which will turn black and are edible and can remain on the tree for a long period of time. They are very attractive to birds. The leaves are shiny, deep green and alternately on the stems. They can be hairy on both sides.

Position: Full sun for best growth and good flush of flowers, tolerating partial shade, protect from hot northerly winds and strong frost.

Watering: Lavender Star likes plenty of water, especially in summer - but NO wet feet! Keep moist all the time.

Feeding: Twice a month during the growing season. Supplement occasionally with a fertilizer for acid loving plants. Reduce it in winter to every two months if using a slow release organic fertilizer.

Repotting: Young plants every year, older ones every second or third year after flowering. Use standard free draining bonsai mix!

Pruning & Wiring: Prune back branches hard after flowering - continue to prune using clip and grow method anytime. Keep pinching new shoots back to two sets of leaves which will help with the ramification! Heavy structural pruning best done in late autumn and wiring can be done anytime using aluminium wire only!

Propagation: Softwood cuttings in spring or early summer and air-layering.

Pests and diseases: Caterpillars, very few problems with insects or disease.

Styles: Informal Upright, Slanting, Cascade, Semi-cascade, Root-over-rock and Clump.

Some other species for Bonsai:

- *Grewia bicolor* - yellow flowers
- *Grewia lasiocarpa* - white flowers
- *Grewia robusta* - light pink flowers

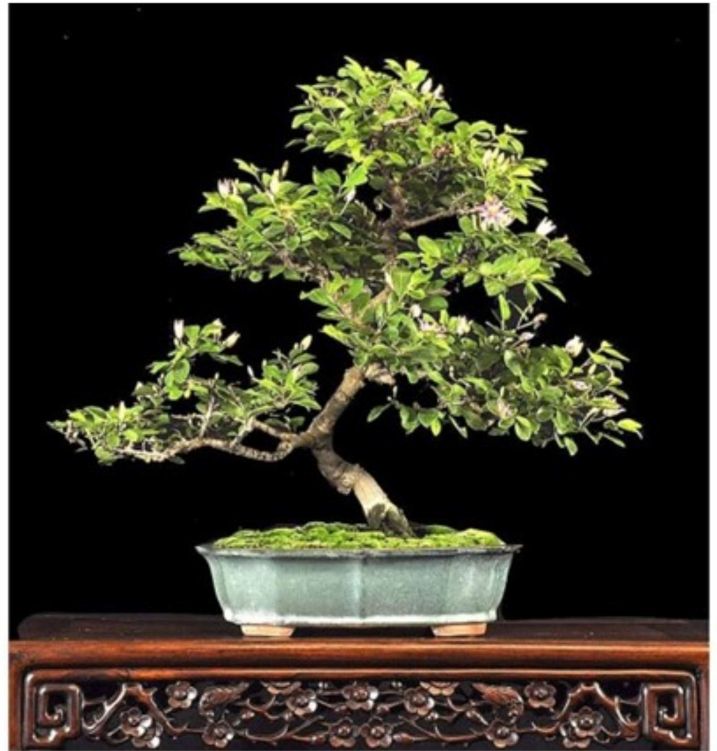
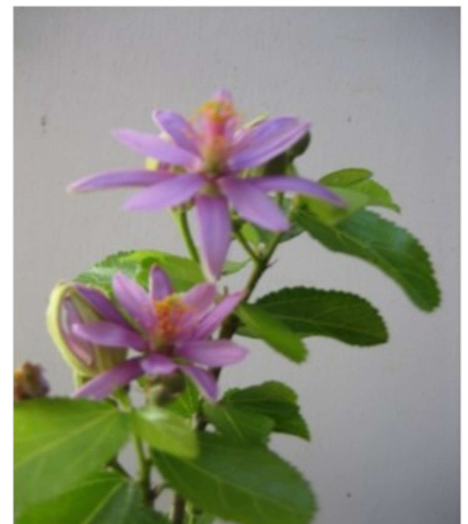
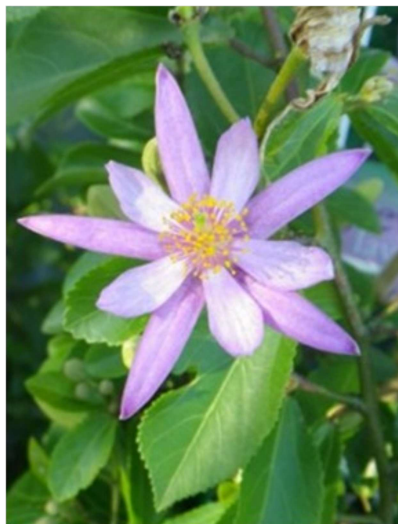


Photo courtesy of BonsaiShop.com.au



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