
Dracaena draco

Dragon's Blood Tree



**WAITE
ARBORETUM**

Dracaena draco was chosen for the Waite Arboretum logo because its distinctive flat-topped appearance and regularly arranged swollen branches make it instantly recognisable.

The species comes from the Cape Verde and Canary Islands and a new subspecies has recently been discovered in Morocco. Each island group has its own form and this specimen has the massive branches and longer leaves of the Canary Islands form.

Dragon's blood tree may attain a great age. One specimen on Tenerife was famous for centuries and long believed to be the oldest tree in the world. When it blew down in 1868 the tree was 21 m tall and its girth was a massive 24 m close to the ground and 15 m at chest height.

The species exhibits sympodial branching. The straight trunk grows for about 10 years before flowering and then producing its first ring of branches. About every 10 years thereafter, each axis gives rise to another ring, so the age of a tree can be estimated by counting the number of branching points to reach the canopy.

The dark red resinous sap that gives the tree its common name is used for colouring varnishes and at one time was also used for medicinal purposes.