

Plant of the Month, December 2019

Arbutus unedo - by Liam McCaughey

Continuing the red theme of October, there is double value in the garden now with the *Arbutus unedo*, being simultaneously in flower and in fruit. Known as the strawberry tree - but the fruits are bitter (its name *unedo* implies 'eat one only') - though the blackbirds don't find a problem and are gorging on them this month.



Arbutus is essentially a Mediterranean tree, but there are relict populations in Ireland, in Killarney and round Lough Gill in Sligo. In Irish mythology it arose from a fruit brought by the *Tuatha De Danaan* from the Land of Promise.

