



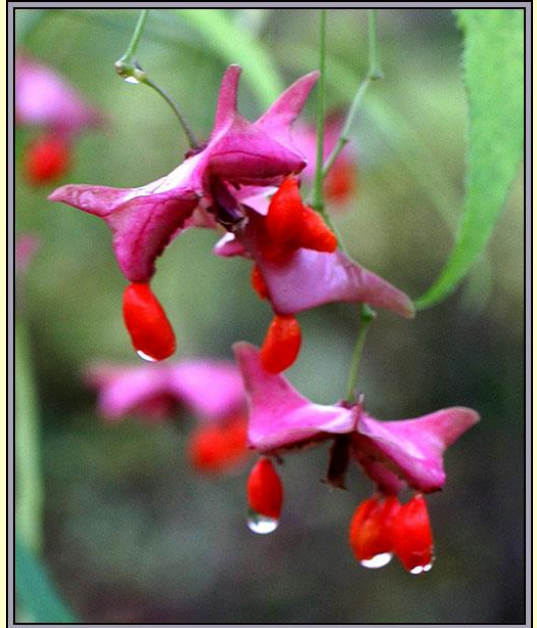
Alpine Garden Society Ulster Group

Plant of the Month, January 2021

Euonymus cornutus* v. *quinquecornutus – by David Ledsham

This is *Euonymus cornutus* v. *quinquecornutus*, 'Five horned spindle tree'. It grows wild in Western China and parts of Vietnam and was introduced into Western horticulture by the plantsman Maurice Foster, although it still remains uncommon in gardens.

Apparently the varietal epithet 'quinquecornutus' has been dumped by the taxonomists and it is now known as plain *Euonymus cornutus*, but this rare shrub is anything but plain.



It often grows to a height of 3 to 4 metres and at first glance can be innocently mistaken for a delicate kind of Willow or Bamboo because of the erect slender stems which are clothed

with thin narrow leaves. The flowers are missable. But then in late Autumn the fruits develop into curious five pronged pink 'horns' with each horn containing a bright orange seed and it is this spectacle which gives the shrub the popular name of The Cocked Hat Spindle. Nevertheless, despite its apparent fragility, this shrub is well capable of withstanding the roughest northern winters and requires very little extra care or maintenance.



In fact it has been known to happily self-seed when planted as a sub shrub underneath taller trees, and there its copious and colourful fruits can be a welcome sight during the dark, damp days of late Autumn and Winter.

