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## Bay Tree

*Laurus nobilis*

*Fresh from the garden is always better than dried out of a plastic bag*

**Worth Knowing:** The evergreen shrub with its aromatic foliage leaves and numerous small spring-flowers is perfectly suited for cultivation as a pot plant, and can always provide you with the popular seasoning for soups and stews as well as for fish and meat dishes. Fresh bay leaves naturally have a stronger aroma than the commercially available dry leaves. Not only in ancient Rome the victorious field commander got to wear the bay wreath; until today it is considered a special honour and a symbol of glory and peace.

**Natural Location:** The Bay Tree originally comes from Asia, but it is wide-spreaded as typical characteristic plant in the Mediterranean region. Further north, it can only survive in areas with a mild winter since it is not frost-resistant. Curiously enough there are bedded

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you should place the seeds for about 24 hours in a bowl with lukewarm water for priming. After that, plant the seeds about 1 cm deep into moist potting compost and cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out. Don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 20° and 25° Celsius and keep the earth moist, but not wet. After three to nine weeks the first seedlings will come up.

**Place:** In its natural habitat the Bay Tree grows in full sunny places, so it also should be kept at a bright and warm spot in your home. In summer a sunny place, preferable wind-protected and near a heat-preserving wall would be ideal.

**Care:** Best for cultivation is a mix of two third normal potting earth and one third of peat. Water your plant modestly, but regularly with lime-deficient water and avoid waterlogging. To keep it at a reasonable growing height, you should provide the shrub only between March and August with a monthly dose of fluid fertilizer for tub plants. Additional you may prune the Bay Tree, preferably in May after the first growing period or at the end of July.

**During the winter:** Until the first frosty nights the Bay Tree can be kept outdoors. Since it is an evergreen plant, it should be given a bright and cool place for hibernation with a temperature of around 5°C and maximum 10° Celsius. It still needs some watering during winter.