

Strawberry Tree (*Abutilo unedo*)

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The strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo* offers a kind of dual option by including both a small tree and a dwarf form which grows as a shrub. And if you are also searching for garden beauty, a WaterWise tree or shrub, maybe even a tree that is suitable under power lines, please read on.

According to the OSU plant identification site, <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/arun.htm>, the strawberry tree is an “Evergreen shrub/tree, 8-12(35) ft [2.4-3.6(10.6) m] tall, similar width; red-brown [shaggy] attractive bark.” A member of the Ericaceae or Heath Family, this plant has small, urn-shaped flowers. It is the fruit, however, that sets this species apart as they mature each fall into orange-red and “knobby” spherical shapes. Grow this plant in full sun, well-drained soil.

As some of you may have already noticed, the strawberry tree is related to our own native madrone (*Arbutus menzeisii*). However, the strawberry tree is native to Europe, ranging from southwestern Ireland to the Mediterranean. It is a great addition to the WaterWise plants that grow well in the Pacific Northwest.

For those who prefer the shrub form, look for *A. unedo* ‘Compacta.’ It grows as a shrub up to 10’ high by 10’ wide, but can be maintained in a shorter more compact form by judicious pruning. For a profile of this plant see <http://www.greatplantpicks.org/index.php?page=display&id=9068&searchterm=all> which profiles this plant as one of the Great Plant Picks featured by the Miller Botanical Garden in Seattle, WA.

Photo from OSU Plant Identification site at <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/arun9.htm>. For more pics and information, visit this site.

