

Bay Tree

Laurus nobilis · Laurel family

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Evergreen perennial tree/large shrub
MATURITY Usable from year one, slow-growing



SUN
Full-part sun



WATER
Moderate



SOIL PH
6.0–7.5



SPACING
3–5m if
unpruned, or
pot/hedge



DEPTH
as per pot

01 Prunes well into a hedge or pot specimen

Left alone, bay grows into a substantial tree, but it responds very well to clipping — many homesteads keep it as a large pot specimen or a trimmed hedge instead.



bushy perennial clump



or strike a cutting in a pot

02 Planting

METHOD	Plant from a nursery pot; slow-growing, so a larger starting size saves years.
SOIL	Well-drained, moderately fertile.
TIMING	Plant in spring or autumn.

04 Problems

- **Scale insects** — small bumps on stems and leaves; treat with horticultural oil.
- **Sooty mould** — follows scale/sap-suckers; treat the pest.
- **Slow growth** — normal for this species; be patient.
- **Leaf spot** — humid conditions; improve airflow.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY

Most plants — a good non-competitive neighbour

AVOID NEARBY

None major

ROTATION NOTE

Not applicable — long-lived tree/shrub.

03 Growing care

- Water regularly while young, then moderately once established.
- Prune or clip to control size and shape as desired.
- Feed lightly in spring.
- Protect from hard frost while young.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Usable year-round once established.
METHOD	Pick individual leaves as needed.
CURING	Dry leaves flat for a couple of weeks — dried bay is actually preferred in cooking.
STORAGE	Dried, airtight, a year or more.