

Photinia villosa: Oriental Photinia¹

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Introduction

This deciduous shrub or small tree reaches 15 to 18 feet in height with a spread of 10 feet. The irregular, upright-spreading, oval, dense crown is composed of one to three-inch-long leaves which display great variety of color throughout the year. New leaves unfold as pale glimmers of sunlight brushed with pink, mature to a healthy dark green throughout the summer, then change to yellow, bronze, and vivid red in the autumn. Small, flat clusters of white flowers join the dark green leaves in late May and are followed in October by bright red berries, which persist on the plant into the winter, if not devoured by birds.

General Information

Scientific name: *Photinia villosa*

Pronunciation: foe-TIN-nee-uh vill-LOE-suh

Common name(s): Oriental Photinia

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 7B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: sidewalk cutout (tree pit); specimen; street without sidewalk; container or planter; trained as a standard; deck or patio; screen; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

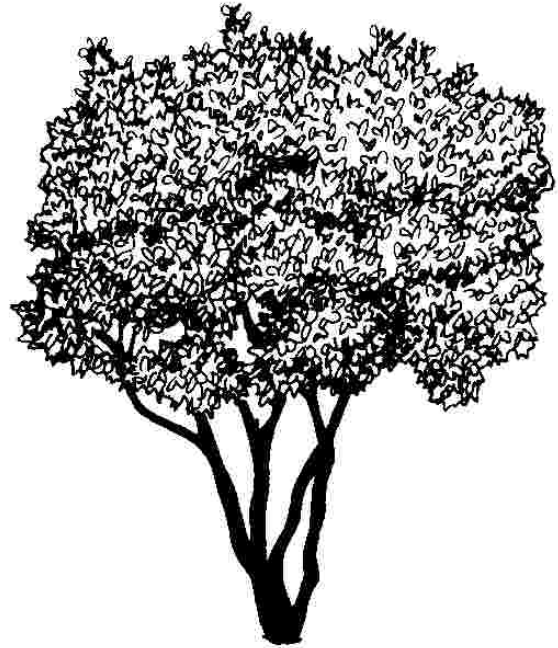


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Photinia villosa*: Oriental Photinia

Description

Height: 15 to 18 feet

Spread: 10 to 12 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: vase, oval

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

1. This document is ENH-605, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed May 2011. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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Figure 2. Range

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: obovate, oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow, copper, red

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: sand; loam; clay; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

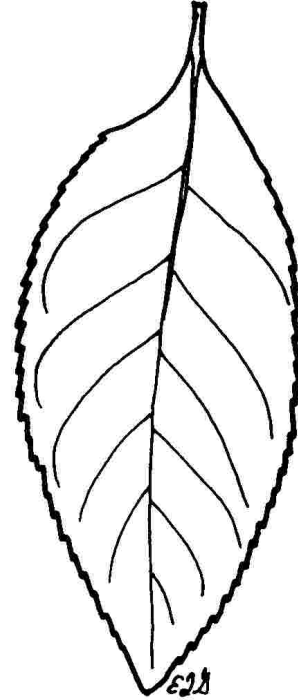


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

Its upright form, irregular branching structure, and attractive berries make Oriental Photinia an attractive planting choice for the winter garden, specimen use, or for the mixed shrubbery border. It could also be used as a street tree if it were pruned correctly. It would be recommended for extensive planting if it were not for fireblight disease. Therefore, it is probably best used as a small tree mixed into a shrub border or in limited numbers in urban plantings. It should be tried in areas where fireblight is not a problem.

Oriental Photinia should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, acid soil.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

Pests

No pests are of major concern. Some caterpillars chew foliage and there may be occasional scale infestations.

Diseases

Oriental Photinia is susceptible to leaf spot, powdery mildew, and seriously damaged by fire blight.