Introduction

Chinese Jujube is an interesting deciduous tree with spiny, gnarled branches and an open, irregular form. Growing at a moderate pace, Chinese Jujube reaches anywhere from 15 to 35 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 30 feet and can be trained to a single trunk. Most unpruned plants grow with several trunks. The mottled gray/black bark is rough and shaggy. The one to two-inch-long leaves have a paler underside and sharp spines at the base of each leaf. Fall color is often a showy yellow, but not consistent. In spring, small clusters of yellow or white, fragrant blossoms appear, hidden in foliage between the leaf and stems. The one-inch-long green fruits ripen to dark red and finally black. Eaten either fresh, candied, canned, or dried like dates, these fruits are quite sweet. Even young, two-year-old trees are able to produce these delectable treats but be forewarned that these fruits can create quite a litter problem. Locate the tree so the fruit drops in a mulch bed or on the lawn, not on a sidewalk, patio or driveway.

General Information

**Scientific name:** *Ziziphus jujuba*

**Pronunciation:** ZIZ-ih-fuss joo-JOO-buh

**Common name(s):** Chinese Date, Common Jujube, Chinese Jujube

**Family:** Rhamnaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6A through 9B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** invasive non-native

**Uses:** fruit

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

Figure 1. Young *Ziziphus jujuba*: Chinese Date

Credits: Ed Gilman

Figure 2. Range

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.
**Description**

- **Height:** 15 to 35 feet
- **Spread:** 10 to 30 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular
- **Crown shape:** round, oval
- **Crown density:** open
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** crenate, serrulate
- **Leaf shape:** ovate, lanceolate
- **Leaf venation:** bowed
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** yellow
- **Fall characteristic:** showy

- **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:** clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

**Other**

- **Roots:** not a problem
- **Winter interest:** no
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant
- **Pest resistance:** unknown

**Use and Management**

Chinese Jujube should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil, acid or alkaline. Plants do not do well on heavy clay or swampy soils.

Propagation is by seed, suckers, or grafting. Young plants transplant easily.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.