

Ziziphus jujuba: Chinese Date¹

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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

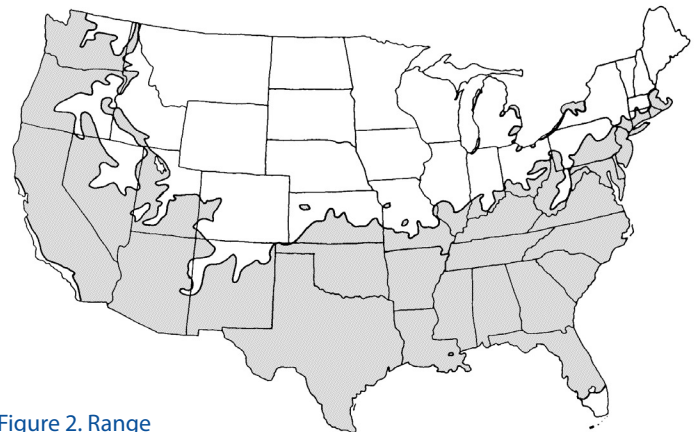


Figure 2. Range

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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

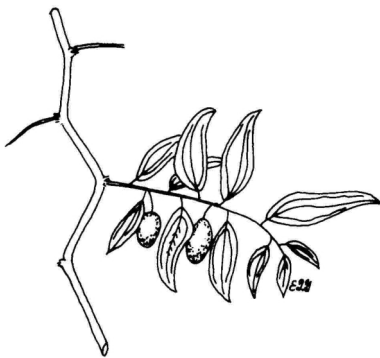


Figure 3.

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red, black

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; no 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: 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.