**Styrax japonicus ‘Emerald Pagoda’: ‘Emerald Pagoda’**

Japanese Snowbell

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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**Introduction**

Japanese Snowbell is a small deciduous tree that slowly grows from 20 to 30 feet in height and has rounded canopy with a horizontal branching pattern. With lower branches removed, it forms a more vase-shaped patio-sized shade tree. The smooth, attractive bark has orange-brown interlacing fissures adding winter interest to any landscape. The white, bell-shaped, drooping flower clusters of Japanese Snowbell are quite showy in May to June.

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**General Information**

**Scientific name:** Styrax japonicus  
**Pronunciation:** STY-racks juh-PAWN-ih-kuss  
**Common name(s):** ‘Emerald Pagoda’ Japanese Snowbell  
**Family:** Styracaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 5A through 8A (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential  
**Uses:** trained as a standard; 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; specimen; street without sidewalk; deck or patio; container or planter; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); highway median  
**Availability:** not native to North America

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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.

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**Description**

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet  
**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical  
**Crown shape:** round, vase  
**Crown density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** sinuate/undulate, entire, serrate  
**Leaf shape:** oblong, elliptic (oval)  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate, brachidodrome  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow, red  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** yes  
**Outstanding tree:** yes  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown  
**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

*Stryx* species is an excellent small patio tree where the flowers and interesting bark can be viewed up close; however, the flowers attract tremendous numbers of bees and one should be cautious about approaching the plant at that time. Japanese Snowbell also makes a wonderful addition to the mixed shrubbery border. Due to its small stature and vase-shape, it can make a nice street tree where overhead space is limited. The fruit is somewhat showy and may cause a small litter problem for a short time in the fall. Fall leaf color is unreliable.

Snowbell prefers a peaty, acid soil that is moist but not waterlogged. In colder areas (USDA hardiness zone 5), locate this tree in an area protected from winter winds. Plants grow better with a couple hours of shade in USDA hardiness zones 7 and 8 but full sun is fine in the North.

Cultivars include: ‘Carillon’ is hardy only to zone 6, grows about one-foot per year and has a weeping habit, can be staked to encourage weeping habit; ‘Crystal’ - upright to fastigiate habit, black green foliage, crisp white flowers with purple pedicels (zone 5); ‘Issai’ - cold hardy to zone 6, grows faster that species and roots easily; ‘Pink Chimes’-pink flowers, cold hardy to zone 6.

Propagate by softwood cuttings in summer. Seeds eventually germinate but exhibit a double dormancy.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern. Ambrosia beetle can attack and lead to further decline of stressed plants.