**Introduction**

Japanese torreya is a very slow-growing evergreen which will eventually reach 40 feet tall in the home landscape and is capable of reaching 75 feet in the wild. With a pyramidal silhouette and long, graceful branches clothed with glossy, dark green leaves, Japanese torreya provides medium to deep shade beneath its canopy. The stiff, 1.25-inch leaves give off a pungent aroma when crushed. The 1.5-inch-long, green, edible fruits follow the insignificant flowers and persist on the tree, requiring two years before maturity when they ripen and split apart. The seeds are very oily.

---

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Torreya nucifera*
- **Pronunciation:** TOR-ee-uh noo-SIFF-er-uh
- **Common name(s):** Japanese torreya, Japanese nutmeg
- **Family:** Taxaceae
- **USDA hardness zones:** 6A through 8B (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Uses:** specimen; hedge; screen
- **Availability:** not native to North America

---

**Description**

- **Height:** 15 to 30 feet
- **Spread:** 15 to 25 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical
- **Crown shape:** pyramidal

---


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

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county’s UF/IFAS Extension office.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, fragrant, needled evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Figure 3. Foliage

**Flower**

Flower color: unknown
Flower characteristics: not showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch, 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: unknown

**Culture**

Light requirement: partial sun or partial shade, shade tolerant
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

**Other**

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: yes
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Japanese torreya should be grown in shaded areas on rich, moist soil. In the colder regions of its range it should be grown where it can be protected from harsh winter winds. It is not widely available but could be produced and planted as specimens in home and commercial landscapes.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.