

Wisteria sinensis Chinese Wisteria¹

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Introduction

Chinese wisteria is a shade-tolerant vine, but it blooms only when grown in the partial to full sun (Fig. 1). It prefers a deep, rich loam, but will grow in any soil. Wisteria has a fast growth rate and may be hard to transplant due to a coarse root system. Planting from containers is easy. The roots are aggressive and could disrupt a nearby garden. The violet-blue flowers, borne in showy, drooping racemes, are produced in late winter (hardiness zone 8 and 9) to early summer (hardiness zone 6). They cover the plant for several weeks each year.

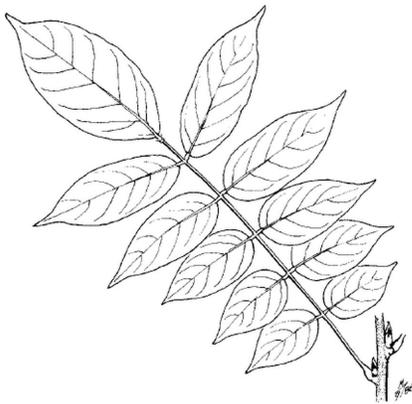


Figure 1. Chinese wisteria

General Information

Scientific name: *Wisteria sinensis*

Pronunciation: wiss-STEER-ree-uh sye-NEN-sis

Common name(s): Chinese wisteria

Family: Leguminosae

Plant type: vine

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: espalier; container or above-ground planter

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

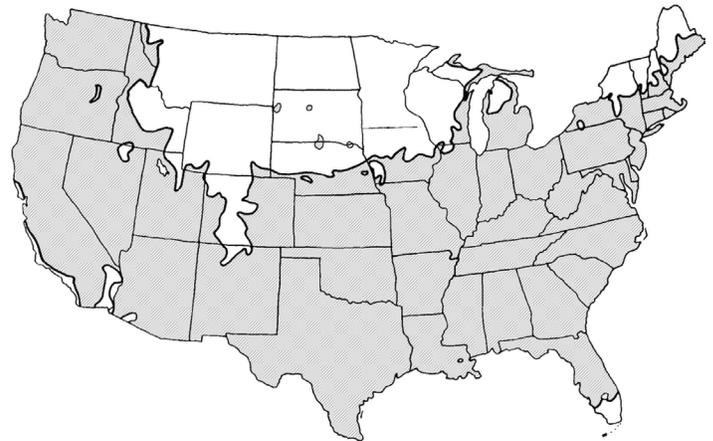


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

1. This document is FPS-613, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: violet-blue

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: potentially invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Pruning is needed to keep this 30-foot vine contained. The vine can be seen when it is in flower in many urban areas

where it has escaped its original bounds in a nearby yard. It is probably best used for training to grow onto an arbor where flowers can droop, forming a showy, fragrant ceiling of color. It can be maintained as a shrub in a landscape with plenty of room, provided it is pruned several times during the growing season. Avoid excessive applications of nitrogen fertilizer, because that will lead to foliage growth to the detriment of flowering. No fertilizer is needed in many situations.

Cultivars include 'Alba'—white flowers; 'Jako'—white, fragrant flowers; 'Plena'—double flowers; 'Purpurea'—purplish-violet flowers.

Pests and Diseases

No problems usually limit growth of wisteria. However, black vine weevil may attack wisteria. Crown gall causes formation of galls on the main roots or stems. Remove and destroy infected plants. Leaf spots may be seen, but infected leaves can be picked off. Powdery mildew coats the leaves with a white, powdery growth.