



Diospyros kaki Japanese Persimmon¹

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese Persimmon is a species related to Common Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), but is native to Asia (China, Japan) (Fig. 1). It can grow to about 30 feet when mature. This is an excellent fruit tree for ornamental use and makes an excellent specimen. The tree is a sight to behold when leaves have fallen in autumn, displaying the bright yellow-orange fruits throughout the canopy. Similar to Common Persimmon, its preference is for a moist, well-drained soil in full sun locations. The tree has good drought tolerance. Japanese Persimmon develops an attractive red fall color, but the two to four-inch-diameter fruits can be a big mess when they fall from the tree.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Diospyros kaki*

Pronunciation: dye-OSS-pih-ross KACK-eye

Common name(s): Japanese Persimmon

Family: *Ebenaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; fruit tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

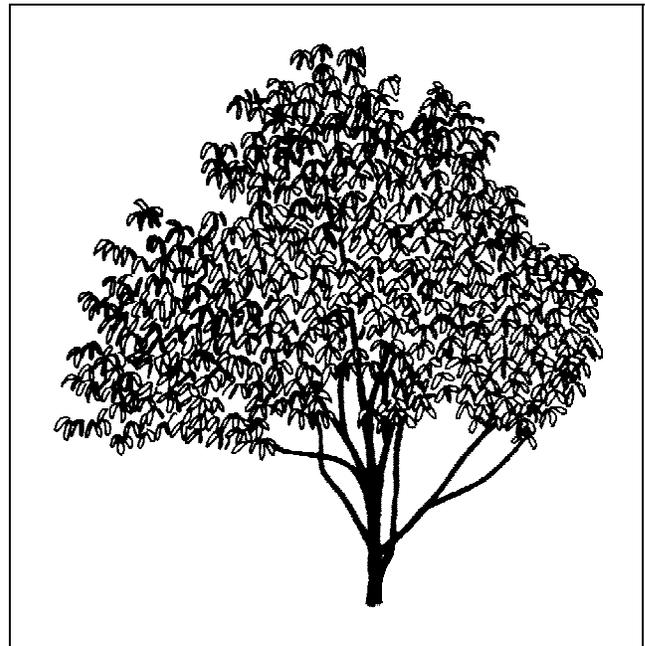


Figure 1. Young Japanese Persimmon.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round; upright

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire; serrate
- Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); obovate
- Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate
- Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** orange; red; yellow
- Fall characteristic:** showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white
- Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval; round
- Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches
- Fruit covering:** fleshy
- Fruit color:** orange

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
- Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
- Breakage:** resistant
- Current year twig color:** brown; gray
- Current year twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** moderate
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

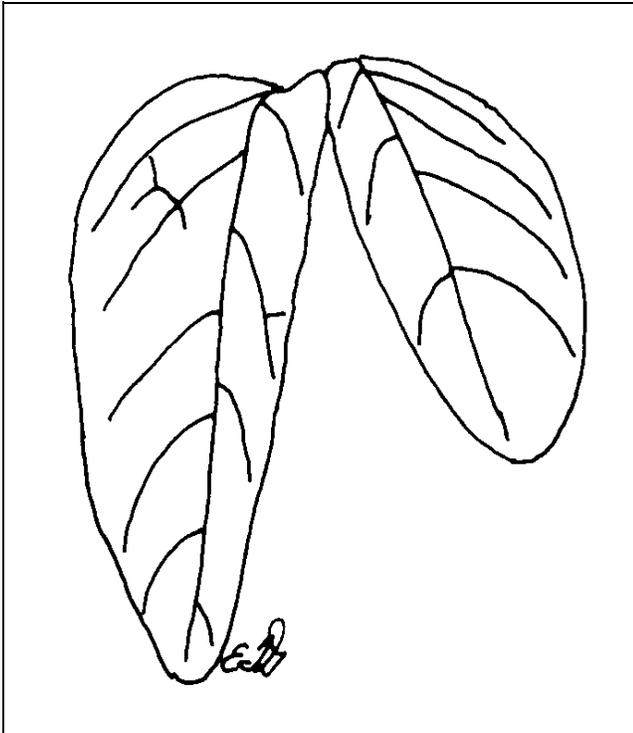


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Persimmon.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Certainly not a street or parking lot tree, Japanese Persimmon is probably best located as an occasional specimen where it can be viewed from a distance, away from walks. This will ensure that the fruit will drop on the lawn, not on a walk. Better yet, plant the tree in a loose, low-growing groundcover so dropping fruit will be hidden from view in the foliage of the groundcover.

Some non-astringent cultivars have been selected and could be available locally.

Pests and Diseases

A trouble-free tree, but messy in fruit.