



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Fatsia japonica*¹

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Introduction

The broad, deeply-lobed, dark green leaves and stiff stems of *Fatsia* create a bold landscape effect for any shady spot but it is especially well-suited for entranceways or container culture (Fig. 1). Upright stems bend and curve their way to about eight feet tall before falling horizontally under their own weight. New sprouts often originate toward the base of older stems keeping the plant busy to the ground. Upright clusters of showy, creamy white flowers in fall are followed in winter by shiny, black, inedible fruit. Fruits persist on the prominent stalks for several weeks. Plant three feet apart in a mass planting for a coarse-textured effect.

General Information

Scientific name: *Fatsia japonica*

Pronunciation: FAT-see-uh juh-PAW-nick-uh

Common name(s): *Fatsia*

Family: *Araliaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; specimen; container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; accent; foundation

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



Figure 1. *Fatsia*.

Description

Height: 5 to 8 feet

Spread: 3 to 10 feet

Plant habit: upright; round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** serrate
- Leaf shape:** star-shaped
- Leaf venation:** palmate
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white
- Flower characteristic:** fall flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- Fruit cover:** fleshy
- Fruit color:** black
- Fruit characteristic:** attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- Current year stem/twig color:** green
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade
- Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam;
- Drought tolerance:** moderate
- Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

Other

- Roots:** usually not a problem
- Winter interest:** no special winter interest
- Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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

Use and Management

Although tough and leathery in appearance, the leaves of Japanese Fatsia cannot tolerate sunny locations. It can tolerate some filtered light but too much sun can burn the leaves and prolonged exposure will eventually kill the plant. As stems become tall and lanky, prune back to increase growth and leaf production on the bottom of the plant. Fatsia will grow in any soil that doesn't become soggy. It also makes a nice house plant in a brightly lit area.

Propagation of Fatsia is from cuttings which root easily, or by seed which should be kept cool.

Fatsia can be occasionally bothered by scale or mealybugs.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

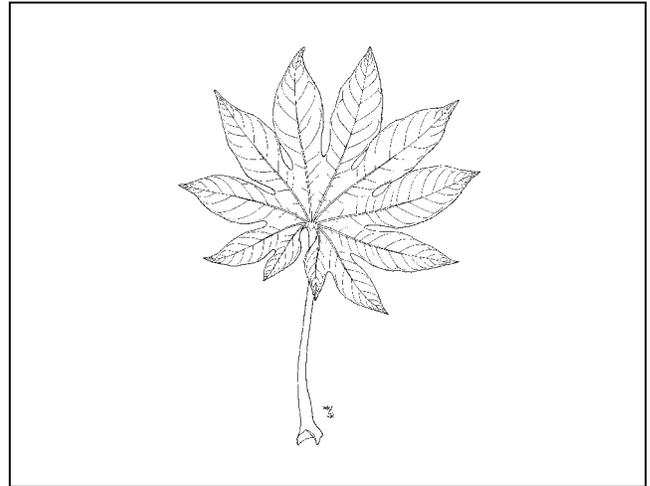


Figure 3. Foliage of Fatsia