



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

***Holmskioldia sanguinea*¹**

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Introduction

Chinese Hat Plant grows to be about 6- to 8-feet-tall and can make an attractive shrub if properly grown (Fig. 1). The most noted feature of the plant is the bright orange flowers which to some people resemble a hat. Flowers produced year-round provide for quite a show.

General Information

Scientific name: *Holmskioldia sanguinea*

Pronunciation: holm-skee-OLD-dee-uh san-GWIN-ee-uh

Common name(s): Chinese Hat Plant

Family: *Verbenaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: trained as a standard; hedge; specimen; border

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

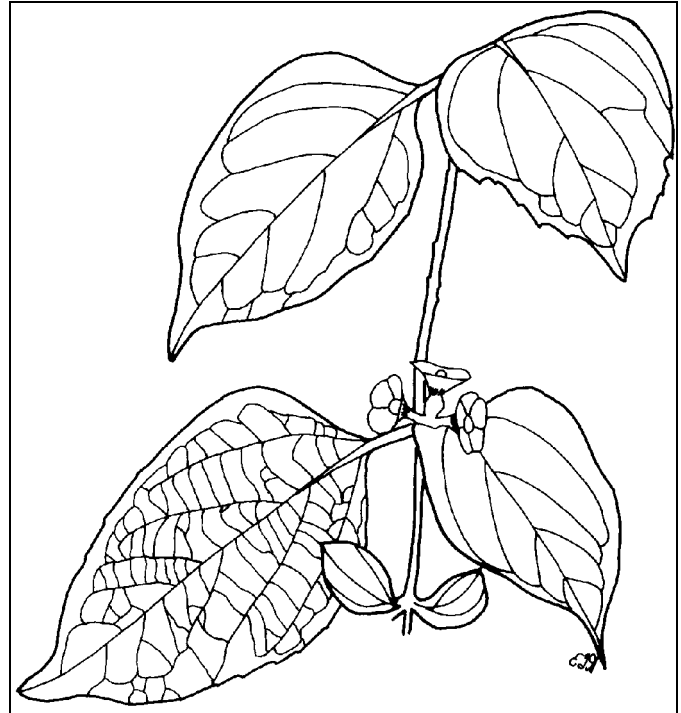


Figure 1. Chinese Hat Plant.

Description

Height: 5 to 8 feet

Spread: 5 to 8 feet

Plant habit: vase shape; round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: brachidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: orange

Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

This plant has been around for many decades but has yet to make a big impact on the retail garden center market. This may change as nursery operators continue to search for “new and different” plants. Lack of popularity may be due to the less than symmetrical growth habit and the tendency toward thinning at the bottom of the plant. The plant also becomes woody with age, but it can be rejuvenated simply by cutting back close to the ground every few years.

Chinese Hat Plant can be used best toward the back of a shrub border. Let it grow to its natural height, but hide the bottom of the plant with shorter shrubs planted about 5 feet in front. This will allow the most unusual flowers to display at the top of the border. The other technique that will make it more attractive is to grow the plant in an open location receiving all-day sun. Place it far enough away from structures and other plants so that it will not have to be clipped. Provide regular irrigation when soil becomes dry.

Pests and Diseases

Soil borne nematodes present the biggest challenge to growing this plant.