



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Spiraea cantoniensis*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This easily grown, deciduous *Spiraea* has fine-textured, small leaves on long, graceful, arching branches (Fig. 1). The pure white, spring flowers appear in dense, bouquet-like clusters all along the stems, giving the plant much the appearance of a foaming fountain when in full bloom.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Spiraea cantoniensis*

**Pronunciation:** spy-REE-uh kan-toe-nee-EN-sis

**Common name(s):** Reeve's *Spiraea*, Bridal-Wreath

**Family:** *Rosaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7 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:** mass planting; specimen; container or above-ground planter; foundation

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

### Description

**Height:** 4 to 8 feet

**Spread:** 4 to 8 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate



Figure 1. Reeve's *Spiraea*.

**Texture:** fine

#### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** rhomboid

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

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

**Current year stem/twig color:** brown

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**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:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

## Use and Management

Reeves Spirea makes an attractive specimen planting, working well also as a hedge or mixed with other flowering shrubs. It needs six to eight feet to develop into the natural fountain or mound-like habit. Little pruning is necessary but plants can be trimmed after flowering to control size and maintain compact growth. Flowers are produced on year-old growth so pruning should be done just after flowering.

Reeves Spirea grows best in full sun or high shifting shade. Plants receiving less than four or five hours of direct sun become thin and flower poorly. Plant on four to five-foot centers to form a mass planting. As with other white-flowering plants, place in front of other green foliated plants or other dark background to show the best flower display.

The cultivar 'Lanceata', or Double Reeves Spirea, is more often seen in the south than the species and reaches a height of four to six feet. Double Reeves Spirea is almost evergreen in the deep south and parts of California.

Propagation is by seeds, cuttings, or division.

No pests are of major concern.

Spiraea aphid causes leaf curling and is usually found on the shoot tips or in flower clusters. Heavy infestations reduce the amount of growth produced by the plant. The insects can be dislodged with high pressure water spray from the garden hose.

Oblique-banded leaf roller rolls and webs the leaves together. Hand pick infested leaves.

Inspect the stems of unhealthy-looking shrubs for scales. Use sprays of horticultural oil to minimize injury to predators that help control scales.

### Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

Fireblight causes the leaves to appear scorched. The twigs tips die back and dead leaves hang on blighted branches. Prune out infected branches and avoid high nitrogen fertilizer.

A leaf spot may infect the leaves.

Powdery mildew forms a white coating on the leaves.