



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Wisteria sinensis¹

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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.

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

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

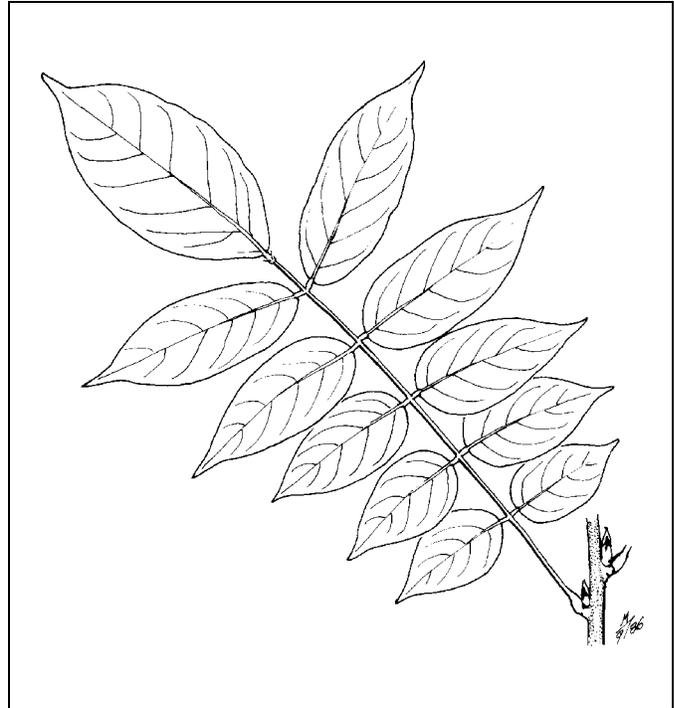


Figure 1. Chinese Wisteria.

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

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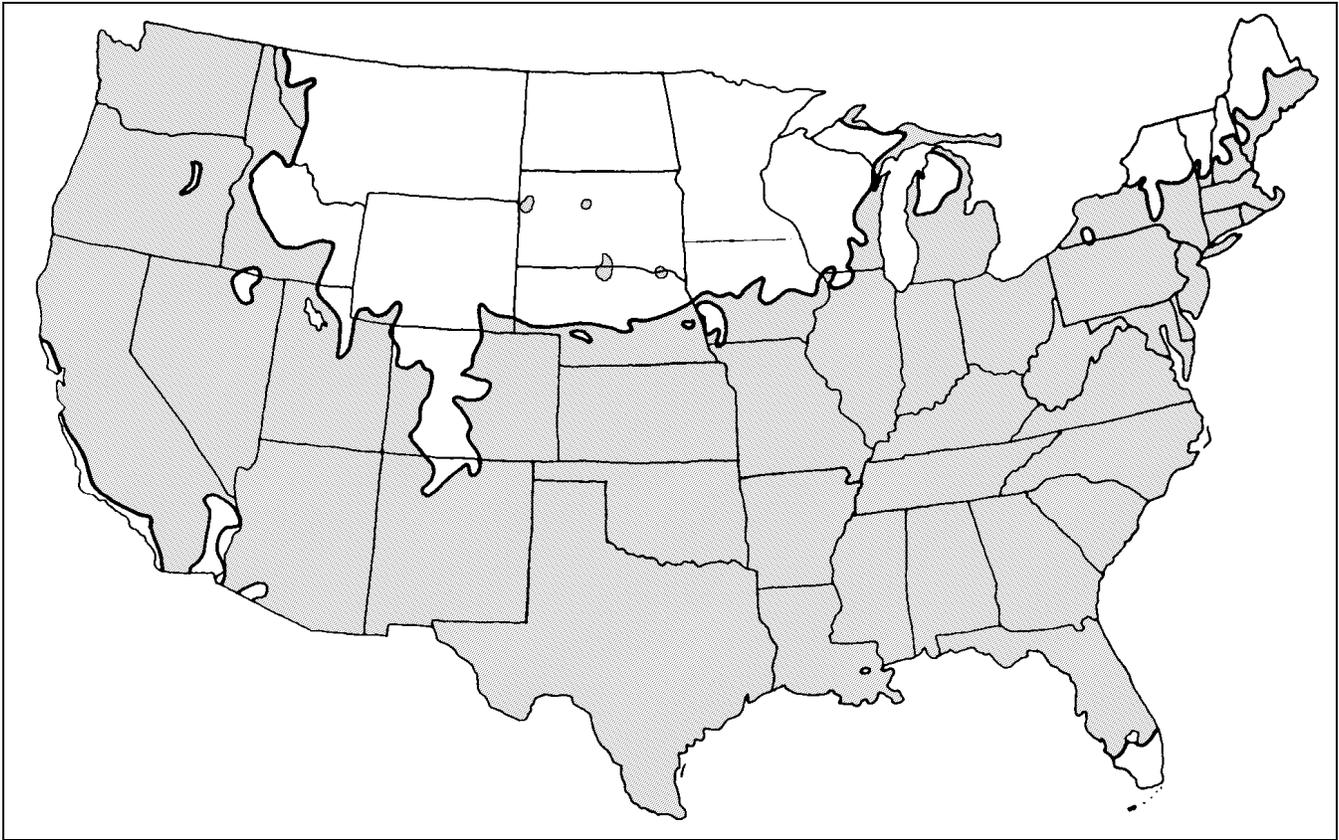


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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 as these 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.

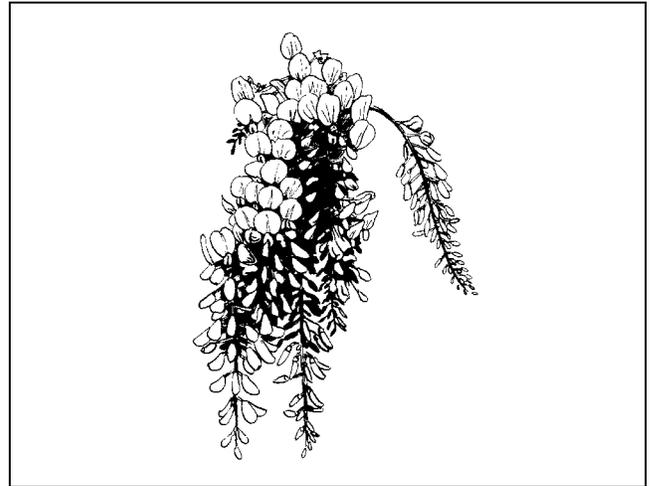


Figure 3. Flower of Chinese Wisteria