



Photinia glabra Red-Leaf Photinia¹

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INTRODUCTION

Widely planted for its attractive, bright-red, new leaf growth, Japanese Photinia is a densely-foliated, broadleaf evergreen which grows 15 to 20 feet in height (Fig. 1). Bright red leaves among the dark green ones afford a bit of foliage interest throughout the fall and winter in southern climates (USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9). The fragrant, four-inch-wide flower clusters appear in early spring and are followed by somewhat showy, red berries which ripen to black.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Photinia glabra*

Pronunciation: foe-TIN-nee-uh GLAY-bruh

Common name(s): Red-Leaf Photinia, Red-Top

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; trainable as a standard; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

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

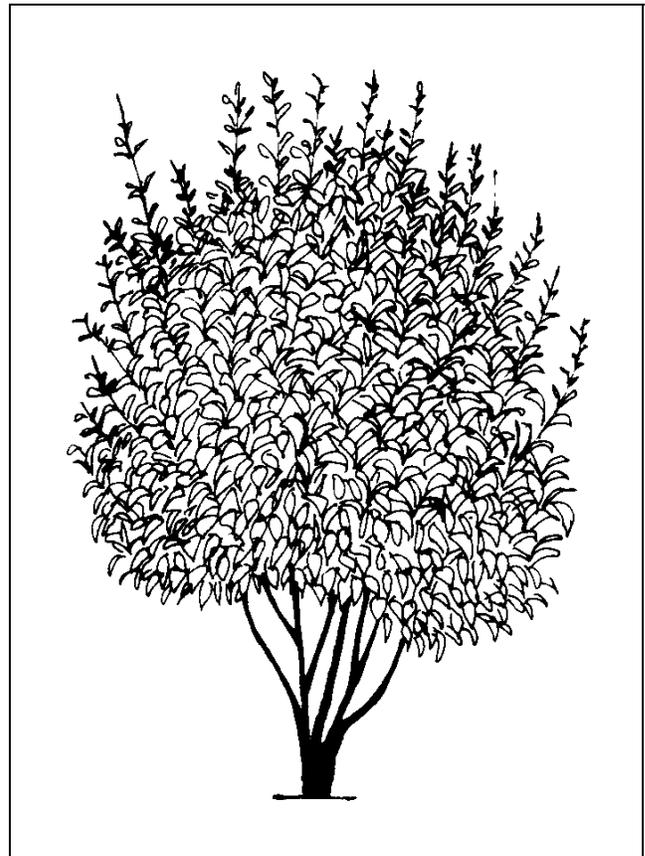


Figure 1. Middle-aged Red-Leaf Photinia.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

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

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: oval; round; vase shape

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green; purple or red

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black; red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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; reddish

Current year twig thickness: medium

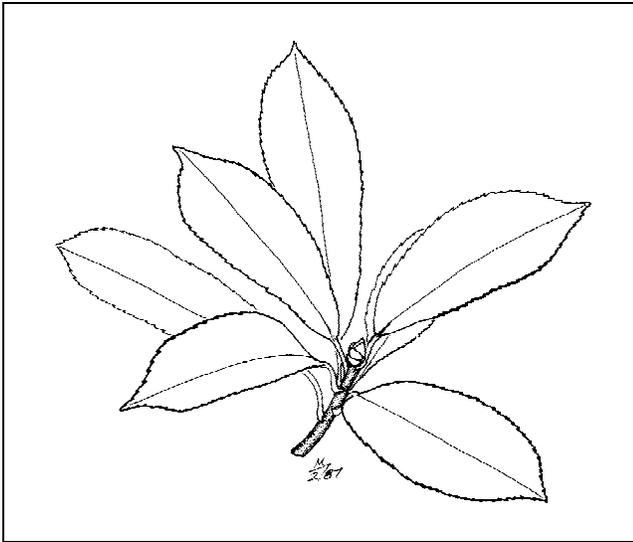


Figure 3. Foliage of Red-Leaf Photinia.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

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: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Often used as a hedge or dense screen, Japanese Photinia can easily be trained into a multi-trunked small tree for patio or specimen use. It is occasionally sold as a standard, with all the branches originating from the top of a four to five-foot-tall straight trunk. Photinia does not make a good clipped hedge because it will not keep foliage on the lower branches, grows too rapidly and does not branch enough. But it will form a nice tall screen. It can be used to frame a residential street by planting properly trained specimens on 10 to 15 foot centers. Although the red foliage color contrasts well in most applications, landscape designers avoid planting it against a red brick wall because it clashes with brick.

Growing best in full sun on moist, organic soils, Photinia grows rapidly and is very tolerant of hard pruning.

The cultivar 'Rubens' has bright, bronze-red young leaves.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

Mites, scales, aphids, and caterpillars are occasional pests but do no major damage.

Diseases

It is susceptible to fire blight and leaf spot which can cause serious defoliation. Be sure to locate plants in full day sun to help prevent these devastating diseases.