



Torreya nucifera Japanese Torrey¹

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese Torrey is a very slow-growing evergreen which will eventually reach 40 feet tall in the home landscape and is capable of reaching 75 feet in the wild (Fig. 1). With a pyramidal silhouette and long, graceful branches clothed with glossy, dark green leaves, Japanese Torrey provides medium to deep shade beneath its canopy. The stiff, 1.25-inch leaves give off a pungent aroma when crushed. The 1.5-inch-long, green, edible fruits follow the insignificant flowers and persist on the tree, requiring two years before maturity when they ripen and split apart. The seeds are very oily.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Torreya nucifera*

Pronunciation: TOR-ee-uh noo-SIFF-er-uh

Common name(s): Japanese Torrey,
Japanese-Nutmeg

Family: *Taxaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hedge; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

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

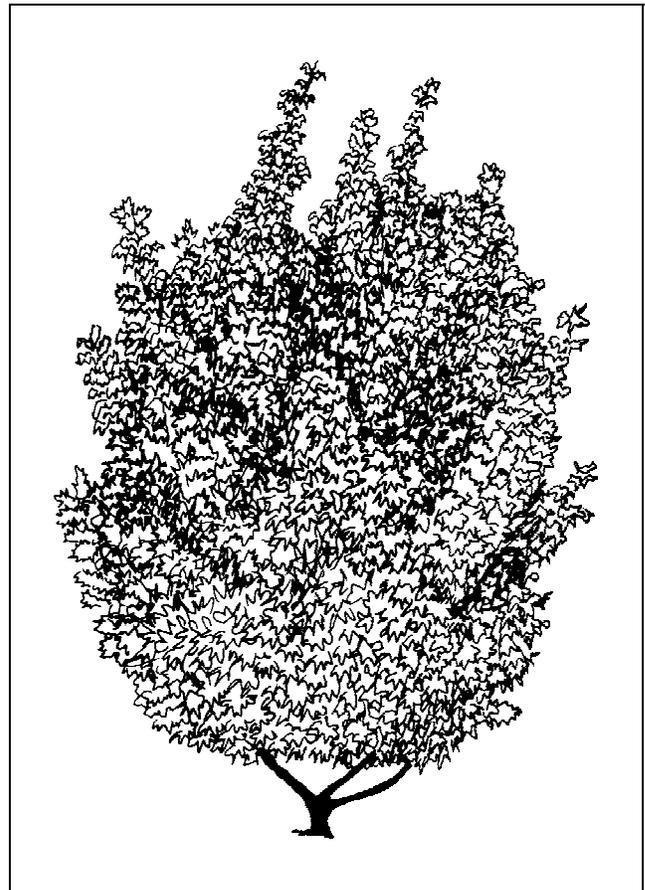


Figure 1. Young Japanese Torrey.

or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: pyramidal

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen; fragrant;
needle leaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not
showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches; .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; suited for human
consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; no
significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and
will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian
clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be
grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop
a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic;
well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

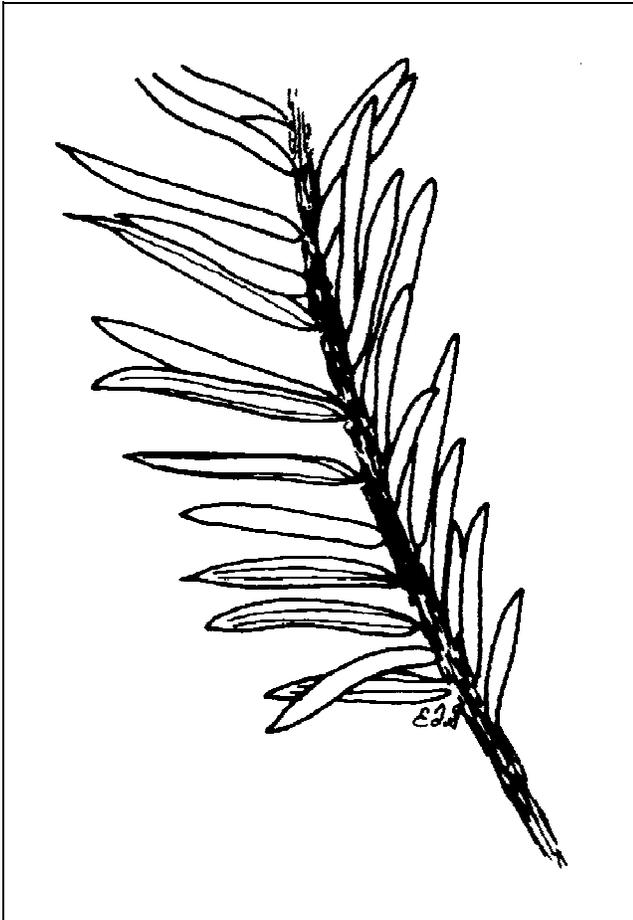


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Torreya.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Japanese Torreya should be grown in shaded areas on rich, moist soil. In the colder regions of its range it should be grown where it can be protected from harsh winter winds. It is not widely available but could be produced and planted as specimens in home and commercial landscapes.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.