

Japanese Tree Lilac



Japanese Tree Lilac (*Syringa reticulata*)

General Description

A very large shrub or small tree with stiff, spreading branches developing a somewhat oval-rounded to vase-shaped crown. Large showy flowers. Attractive winter fruit display. The largest tree in North Dakota is 45 feet tall with a canopy spread of 39 feet.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Buds are opposite.

Bud Color - Brownish.

Bud Size - Sessile, subglobose, with 4 pairs of scales, medium-large.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple leaf, broad ovate to ovate.

Leaf Margins - Entire, smooth.

Leaf Surface - Glabrous above, glabrescent and reticulate below.

Leaf Length - 2 to 4½ inches.

Leaf Width - 1 to 3 inches.

Leaf Color - Dark green above, grayish-green beneath.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Perfect, fragrant, borne in large terminal panicles.

Flower Color - Creamy-white, very showy.

Fruit Type - Warty, dehiscent, 2-celled, 4 to 6 inch long cluster of capsules. Quite attractive in fall and winter.

Fruit Color - Smooth, leathery, light tan to brown.

Form

Growth Habit - Informal habit of multiple stems or trunks.

Texture - Medium-coarse, summer; medium, winter.

Crown Height - 20 to 25 feet.

Crown Width - 15 to 25 feet.

Bark Color - Bark is dark gray-brown to purplish, quite smooth and sometimes lustrous, with prominent horizontal lenticels, resembling *Prunus* bark. Old trunks are gray and scaly.

Root System - Shallow, dense.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Adapted to a wide variety of soils.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 7.5.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 3.

Water

Prefers moist well-drained sites. Moderately drought tolerant.

Light

Full sun.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Large shrub or small tree for farmstead windbreaks and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Little value for food or browse. May be of value for nesting by songbirds.

Agroforestry Products

Medicinal - Extracts of *Syringa* species have been used as a substitute for aloes in treating burns and malaria.

Urban/Recreational

Good as a specimen or in groupings. Effective on public grounds, parks and boulevards.

Cultivated Varieties

Amur Tree Lilac (*Syringa reticulata* var. *mandshurica*)

Ivory Silk Tree Lilac (*S. reticulata* 'Ivory Silk')

Summer Snow Tree Lilac (*S. reticulata* 'Summer Snow')

Related Species

Pekin Lilac (*Syringa pekinensis*)

Pests

Disease pests include powdery mildew and leafspots.

Insect pests include lilac borer and scales. Extracts from *Syringa* species are toxic to some insect pests.