

# Ziziphus jujuba: Chinese Date<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Chinese Jujube is an interesting deciduous tree with spiny, gnarled branches and an open, irregular form. Growing at a moderate pace, Chinese Jujube reaches anywhere from 15 to 35 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 30 feet and can be trained to a single trunk. Most unpruned plants grow with several trunks. The mottled gray/black bark is rough and shaggy. The one to two-inch-long leaves have a paler underside and sharp spines at the base of each leaf. Fall color is often a showy yellow, but not consistent. In spring, small clusters of yellow or white, fragrant blossoms appear, hidden in foliage between the leaf and stems. The one-inch-long green fruits ripen to dark red and finally black. Eaten either fresh, candied, canned, or dried like dates, these fruits are quite sweet. Even young, two-year-old trees are

able to produce these delectable treats but be forewarned that these fruits can create quite a litter problem. Locate the tree so the fruit drops in a mulch bed or on the lawn, not on a sidewalk, patio or driveway.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Ziziphus jujuba*

**Pronunciation:** ZIZ-ih-fuss joo-JOO-buh

**Common name(s):** Chinese Date, Common Jujube, Chinese Jujube

**Family:** *Rhamnaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6A through 9B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** invasive non-native

**Uses:** fruit

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



Figure 1. Young *Ziziphus jujuba*: Chinese Date  
Credits: Ed Gilman



Figure 2. Range

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## Description

**Height:** 15 to 35 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 30 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular

**Crown shape:** round, oval

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** crenate, serrulate

**Leaf shape:** ovate, lanceolate

**Leaf venation:** bowed

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

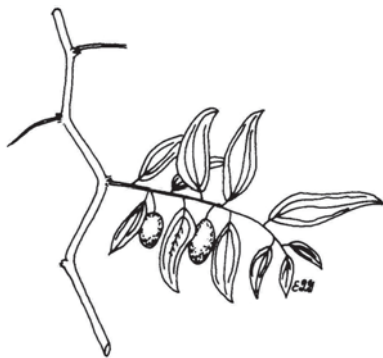


Figure 3.

## Flower

**Flower color:** yellow

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval, round

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red, black

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts squirrels/mammals; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** no

**Outstanding tree:** no

**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant

**Pest resistance:** unknown

## Use and Management

Chinese Jujube should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil, acid or alkaline. Plants do not do well on heavy clay or swampy soils.

Propagation is by seed, suckers, or grafting. Young plants transplant easily.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.