INTRODUCTION

This deciduous shrub or small tree reaches 15 to 18 feet in height with a spread of 10 feet (Fig. 1). The irregular, upright-spreading, oval, dense crown is composed of one to three-inch-long leaves which display great variety of color throughout the year. New leaves unfold as pale glimmers of sunlight brushed with pink, mature to a healthy dark green throughout the summer, then change to yellow, bronze, and vivid red in the autumn. Small, flat clusters of white flowers join the dark green leaves in late May and are followed in October by bright red berries, which persist on the plant into the winter, if not devoured by birds.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Photinia villosa
Pronunciation: foe-TIN-nee-uh vill-LOE-suh
Common name(s): Oriental Photinia
Family: Rosaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 7 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; 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); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 18 feet
Spread: 10 to 12 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: oval; vase shape
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium
Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: oblong; obovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: copper; red; yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; 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: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

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

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

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

---

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Its upright form, irregular branching structure, and attractive berries make Oriental Photinia an attractive planting choice for the winter garden, specimen use, or for the mixed shrubbery border. It could also be used as a street tree if it were pruned correctly. It would be recommended for extensive planting if it were not for fireblight disease. Therefore, it is probably best used as a small tree mixed into a shrub border or in limited numbers in urban plantings. It should be tried in areas where fireblight is not a problem.

Oriental Photinia should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, acid soil.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

**Pests**

No pests are of major concern. Some caterpillars chew foliage and there may be occasional scale infestations.

**Diseases**

Oriental Photinia is susceptible to leaf spot, powdery mildew, and seriously damaged by fire blight.

---

**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers