**Styrax japonicus** ‘Pink Chimes’
‘Pink Chimes’ Japanese Snowbell

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**INTRODUCTION**

This cultivar of Japanese Snowbell is a small deciduous tree that slowly grows from 20 to 30 feet in height and has rounded canopy with a horizontal branching pattern (Fig. 1). With lower branches removed, it forms a more vase-shaped patio-sized shade tree. The smooth, attractive bark has orange-brown interlacing fissures adding winter interest to any landscape. The pink, bell-shaped, drooping flower clusters of ‘Pink Chimes’ are quite showy in May to June.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Styrax japonicus ‘Pink Chimes’
**Pronunciation:** STY-racks juh-PAWN-ih-kuss
**Common name(s):** ‘Pink Chimes’ Japanese Snowbell
**Family:** Styracaceae
**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 8A (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; 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; no proven urban tolerance
**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet
**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
**Crown shape:** round; vase shape
**Crown density:** moderate
**Growth rate:** slow
**Texture:** medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire; serrate; sinuate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red; yellow
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch; < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; 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; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; showy trunk; 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 full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerance: poor
Other cultivars include: ‘Carillon’ grows about one-foot per year, has a weeping habit, can be staked to encourage weeping habit; ‘Crystal’ - upright to fastigate habit, black green foliage, crisp white flowers with purple pedicels (zone 5); ‘Issai’ - cold hardy to zone 6, grows faster that species and roots easily; Propagate by softwood cuttings in summer.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern except ambrosia beetle which can infest stressed trees. It is almost pest free.

**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  
**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

It is an excellent small patio tree where the flowers and interesting bark can be viewed up close; however, the flowers attract tremendous numbers of bees and one should be cautious about approaching the plant at that time. Japanese Snowbell also makes a wonderful addition to the mixed shrubbery border. Due to its small stature and vase-shape, in moist soil it can make a nice street tree where overhead space is limited. The fruit is somewhat showy and may cause a small litter problem for a short time in the fall. Fall leaf color is unreliable.

Snowbell prefers a peaty, acid soil that is moist but not waterlogged. In colder areas (USDA hardiness zone 5b), locate *Styrax japonicus* in an area protected from winter winds. In the south (USDA hardiness zones 7 and 8) locate it so it receives only part sun during the summer to promote best growth and appearance. This cultivar displays wonderful pink flowers as far south as zone 7b (perhaps in zone 8a).