



# *Stewartia pseudocamellia* Japanese Stewartia<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

An excellent, small to medium-sized, deciduous garden tree, 30 to 40 feet tall and 25 to 30 feet wide, Japanese Stewartia is an all-season performer, exhibiting a distinctive branching pattern in winter, camellia-like flowers in summer, and bright yellow and red foliage in autumn (Fig. 1). Most other trees have finished flowering by the time these flowers emerge. Once you have seen it, the fall color is unforgettable. The bark is spectacular, peeling off and exposing contrasting colors. It could be grown for this characteristic alone. The tree branches close to the ground forming a sinewy pattern not unlike crape myrtle. It would make a nice patio tree, could accent an entry way, or could be grown as a canopy tree over a sidewalk. A row of them on either side of a sidewalk spaced 15 feet apart makes an outstanding 'covered walkway'. It could be planted as a slow-growing street tree beneath power lines due to its small stature.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Stewartia pseudocamellia*

**Pronunciation:** stoo-AR-tee-uh  
soo-doe-kuh-MEEL-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Japanese Stewartia

**Family:** *Theaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5B through 7 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; espalier; 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

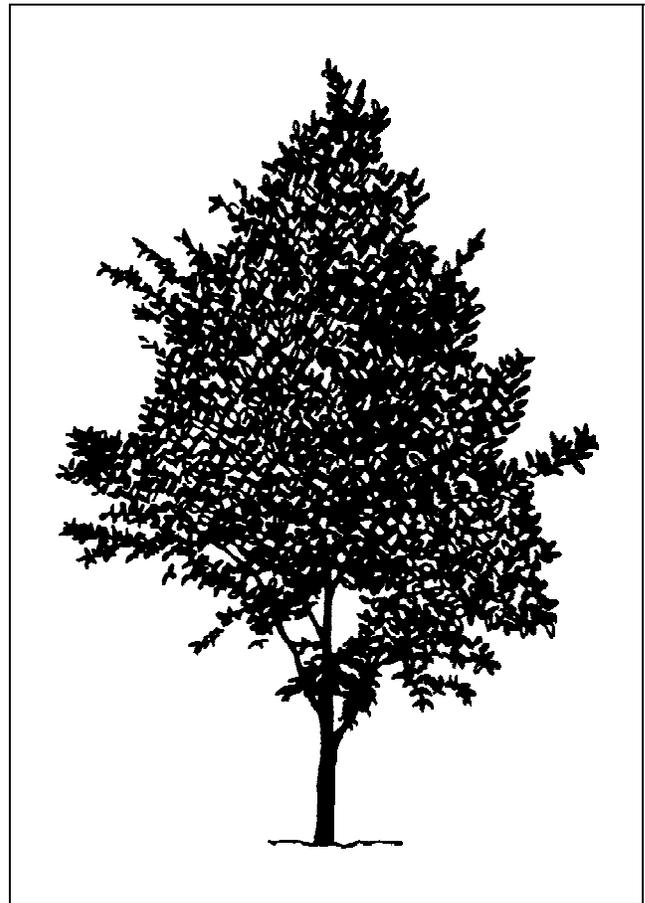
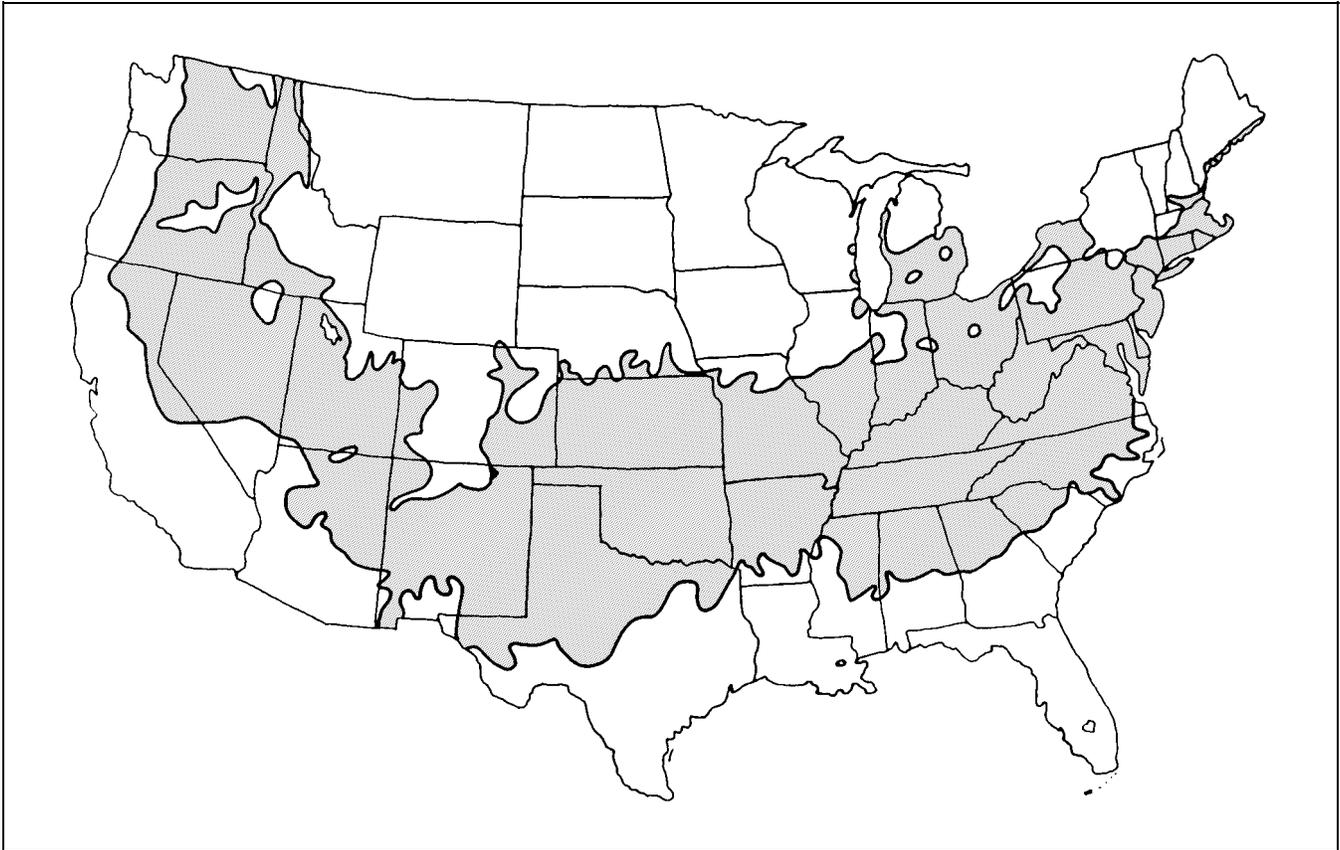


Figure 1. Young Japanese Stewartia.

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; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit);

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance  
**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 30 to 40 feet  
**Spread:** 20 to 30 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms  
**Crown shape:** oval; pyramidal  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** serrulate  
**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); obovate  
**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** purple; red; yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristics:** showy; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval; round  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** green  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

### 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; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; very showy trunk; no thorns

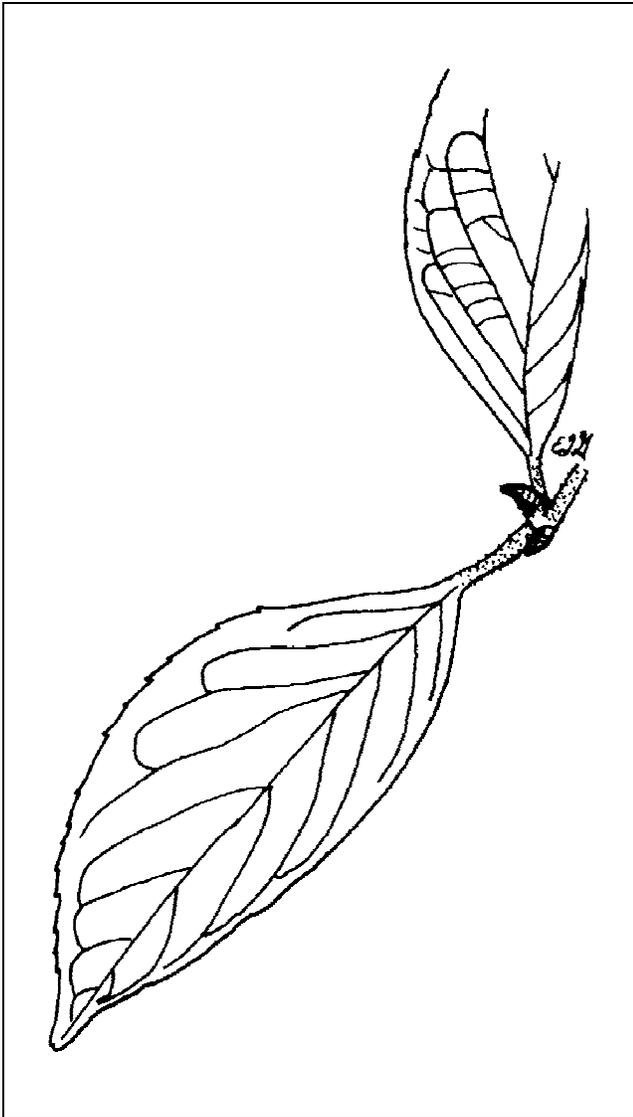


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Stewartia.

**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; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

### 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

**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

Japanese Stewartia is a slow-grower, reportedly best in acid soil (pH 4.5 to 6.5) with ample moisture and high organic matter content. But trees are also found growing very well without irrigation in poor-quality, compacted clay soil. Some leaf-burn may be evident in drier summers in full sun but this does not appear to impact the tree permanently. Stewartia may prefer some shade in warm climates where it develops a more open habit but does quite well in full-day sun forming a dense, dark green head of foliage. Transplant as a small tree from a field nursery in early spring or from a container of any size at any time.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings but is very difficult.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.