



Hovenia dulcis Japanese Raisintree¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Japanese Raisintree can reach 40 to 50 feet in height but is most often seen at 30 to 35 feet with an open, upright, oval silhouette (Fig. 1). Unfortunately it is a little too big for planting beneath most power lines. The tree usually maintains a fairly good central leader with small-diameter main branches. The four to six-inch-long, glossy green leaves are particularly striking and create light shade below the trees but they show no appreciable color change in autumn, dropping while they are still green. In early summer, the branch-tips of the trees are festooned with small, two to three-inch-long cymes of sweetly-fragrant, greenish-white flowers which are quite attractive to insects. These blooms are followed by the production of small, fleshy, brown drupes which ripen to bright red and have a flavor similar to a sweet raisin, giving the tree its common name.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Hovenia dulcis*

Pronunciation: hoe-VEE-nee-ah DULL-sis

Common name(s): Japanese Raisintree

Family: *Rhamnaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 10A (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); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

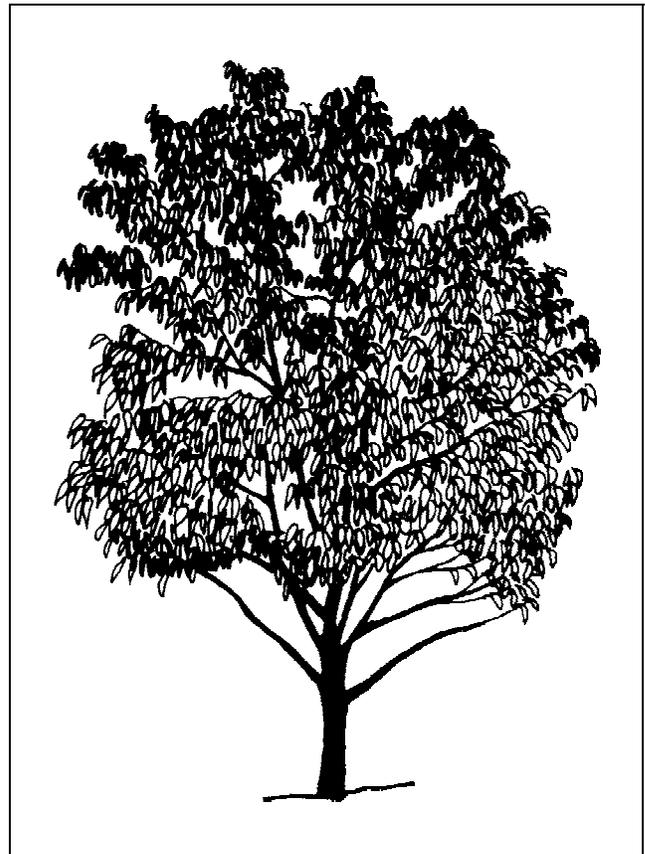


Figure 1. Middle-aged Japanese Raisintree.

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

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 35 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: oval; pyramidal; upright
Crown density: open
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

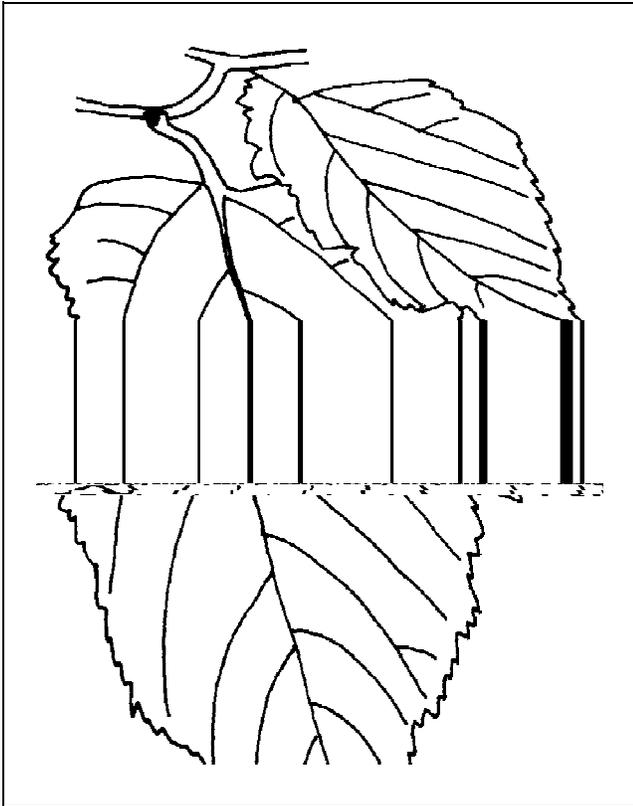


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Raisintree.

The moderate growth rate, upright habit, and striking flowers and fruit make Japanese Raisintree useful as a specimen or container tree. It is a candidate for trying as a street tree due to its small to medium size and ascending branches, but has not yet been extensively used for this purpose.

Trees will grow in almost any well-drained soil in full sun or partial shade. Not for poorly-drained areas or compacted soil, Japanese Raisintree prefers adequate soil space for root exploration.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

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

The bark of Japanese Raisintree is ridged and an attractive light grey with brown valleys. Lower branches can be removed or trimmed to display the lovely bark. The trunk often grows straight up the center of the tree without training.