



Prunus mume Japanese Apricot¹

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INTRODUCTION

Japanese Flowering Apricot may be the longest-lived of the flowering fruit trees eventually forming a gnarled, picturesque, 20-foot-tall tree (Fig. 1). Appearing during the winter on bare branches are the multitude of small, fragrant, pink flowers which add to the uniqueness of the tree's character. The small yellow fruits which follow the blooms are inedible but attractive.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Prunus mume*

Pronunciation: PROO-nus MEW-may

Common name(s): Japanese Apricot

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 12 to 20 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

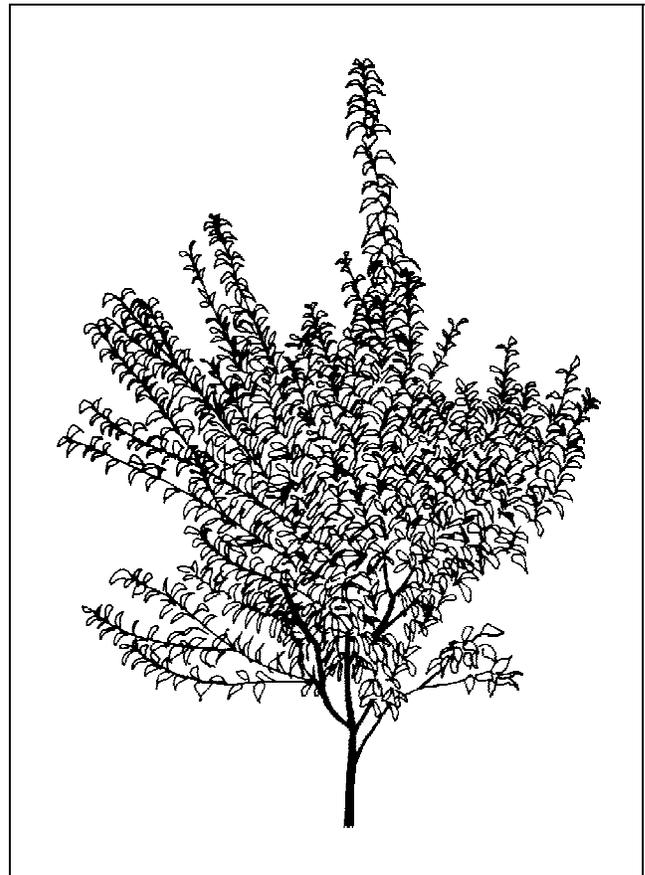


Figure 1. Young Japanese Apricot.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: ovate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: yellow

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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; 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: green

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

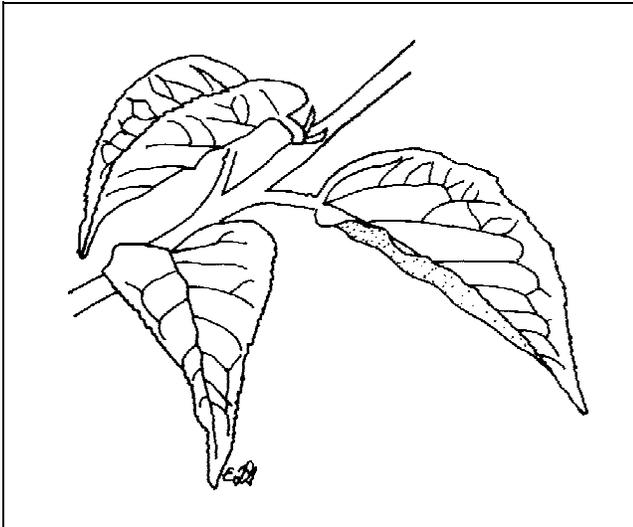


Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Apricot.

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

Ozone sensitivity: sensitive or moderately tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree is well suited for planting near the patio or deck. Locate it where it will receive sun on all sides of the tree to develop a uniform crown, for it becomes one sided when exposed to sun on only one side. It would add color to the shrub border during the winter when most other plants are dormant. It makes a very nice specimen in a lawn or planted as a group to accent a building entrance.

Japanese Flowering Apricot should be grown in full sun on well-drained, fertile, acid soils. Not adapted to poor or dry soils. Plants will require heavy pruning to flower their best. The tree is now being grown by a handful of nurseries, and some nurseries are growing a cultivar or two. Adhere to cultural requirements for best growth.

Cultivars include: 'Bonita', semidouble rose-red blossoms; 'Dawn', large ruffled double pink; 'Peggy Clarke', double deep rose; 'Rosemary Clarke', double

white flowers with red calyces; and 'W.B. Clarke', double pink flowers, weeping plant form. None are really available in large quantities.

Propagation is by cuttings or by seed.

Pests

Aphids cause distortion of new growth, deposits of honeydew, and sooty mold.

Borers attack stressed trees. Keep trees healthy with regular fertilizer applications.

Scales of several types infest the cherries. Horticultural oil is used to control overwintering stages.

Spider mites cause yellowing or stippling but they are very difficult to see.

Tent caterpillars make large webbed nests in trees then eat the foliage. One defoliation may not be serious and small nests can be pruned out and destroyed. Use *Bacillus thuringiensis* when the insects are first seen and are still small.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.