UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

ENH302

Cercidiphyllum japonicum: Katsuratree[1]

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson[2]

Introduction

Katsuratree grows best in a sunny exposure and in a moist soil, but is considered drought-tolerant once established. The tree reaches a mature height and spread of 40 to 60 feet with a symmetrical canopy and new growth is reddish turning a light pale green. Fall color is a spectacular yellow, with some red. The growth rate is moderately rapid when young but slows down with age. The tree has a shallow root system and some of the roots can grow to 6 inches in diameter or more above the soil. The trunk normally flares out at the base, gracefully dividing into the numerous shallow roots often prominent at the soil surface.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*: Katsuratree
Credits: Ed Gilman

General Information

Scientific name: *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*
Pronunciation: ser-sih-dih-FILL-um juh-PAWN-ih-kum
Common name(s): Katsuratree
Family: *Cercidiphyllaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 4B through 8B (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: shade; street without sidewalk; specimen; parking lot island 100–200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 4–6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median
Availability: not native to North America

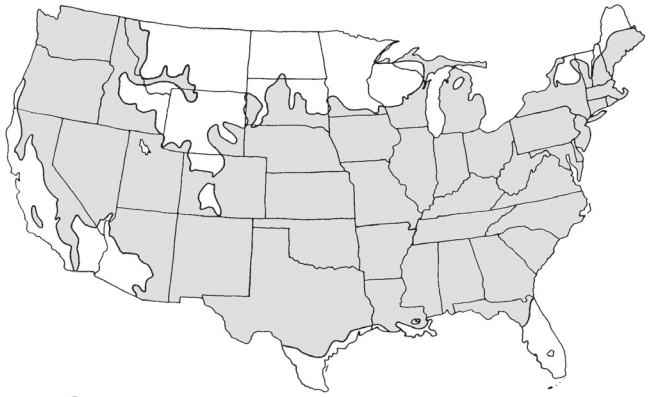


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 40 to 60 feet
Spread: 35 to 60 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical

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Crown shape: oval, upright/erect, pyramidal, spreading
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: crenate
Leaf shape: ovate, orbiculate
Leaf venation: palmate, reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

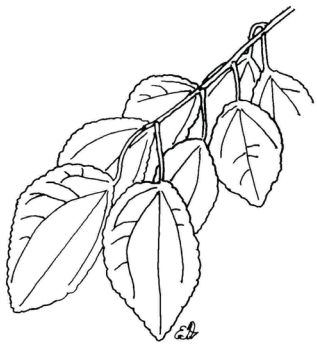


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: green
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like, elongated
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun, or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: can form large surface roots
Winter interest: yes
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Katsuratree has an oval or pyramidal form in youth becoming more upright spreading with age and makes a good shade tree for residential property due to the medium stature. Male trees are more upright, female trees are more spreading. It may also have uses as a street tree where there is adequate soil space to prevent surface roots from raising walks and curbing. Select single stemmed specimens for street tree use and be sure that the major limbs are well spaced along a central trunk to prevent branches from splitting from the tree. Multi-stemmed trees are also sold and they make nice specimens for lawn and park areas, not street trees. Katsuratree has proven to be fairly pest free. Transplant in spring.

Katsuratree is intolerant of drought and should be protected from direct exposure to wind. Leaves often drop in mid to late summer in response to dry weather. Not suited for compacted soil since the shallow roots will be a nuisance for lawn and sidewalk maintenance. Provide irrigation and keep the soil beneath the canopy mulched. Coarse root system calls for production in fabric containers, frequent root pruning field-grown stock, or growing in air root-pruned containers.

The cultivar 'Pendula' grows 15 to 25 feet tall and displays a beautifully graceful, weeping form but it is hard to find.

Pests and diseases

None serious. Occasionally chewing insects eat the foliage.