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Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

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Hovenia dulcis: Japanese Raisintree[1]

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

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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. 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.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Hovenia dulcis*: Japanese Raisintree
Credit: Ed Gilman

General Information

Scientific name: *Hovenia dulcis*

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

Common name(s): Japanese Raisintree

Family: *Rhamnaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6A through 10A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; highway median; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; specimen; container or planter; street without sidewalk; shade

Availability: not native to North America

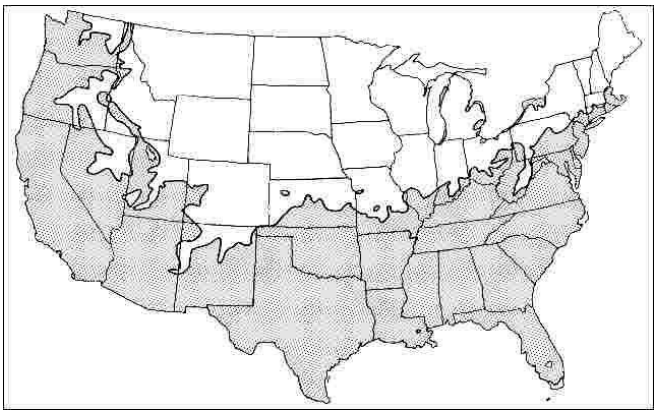

Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 30 to 35 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: upright/erect, oval, pyramidal

Crown density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: ovate, elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate, reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

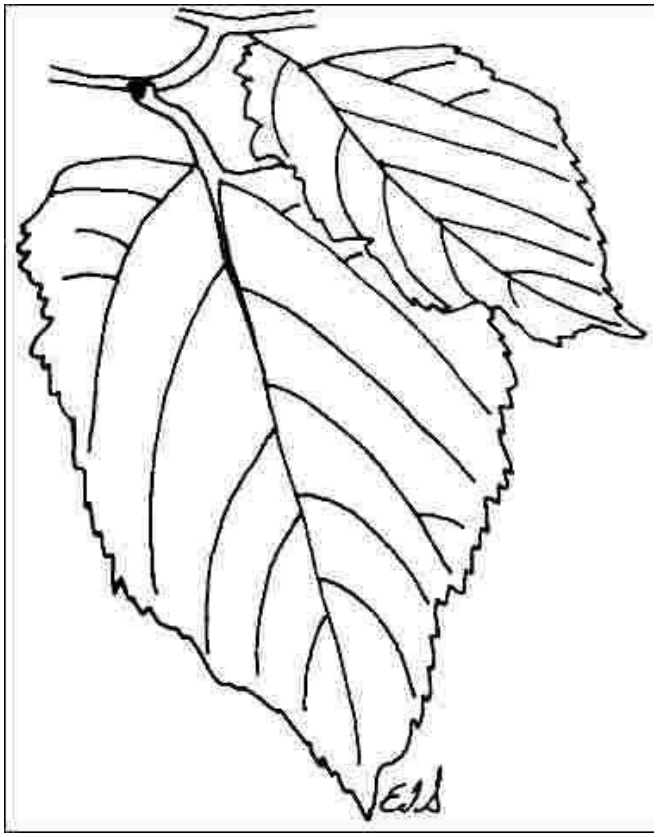

Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

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.

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.

[1] This document is ENH455, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.*

[2] Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus, UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, UF/IFAS Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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