



## *Ziziphus jujuba* Chinese Date<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

Chinese Jujube is an interesting deciduous tree with spiny, gnarled branches and an open, irregular form (Fig. 1). Growing at a moderate pace, Chinese Jujube reaches anywhere from 15 to 35 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 30 feet and can be trained to a single trunk. Most unpruned plants grow with several trunks. The mottled gray/black bark is rough and shaggy. The one to two-inch-long leaves have a paler underside and sharp spines at the base of each leaf. Fall color is often a showy yellow, but not consistent. In spring, small clusters of yellow or white, fragrant blossoms appear, hidden in foliage between the leaf and stems. The one-inch-long green fruits ripen to dark red and finally black. Eaten either fresh, candied, canned, or dried like dates, these fruits are quite sweet. Even young, two-year-old trees are able to produce these delectable treats but be forewarned that these fruits can create quite a litter problem. Locate the tree so the fruit drops in a mulch bed or on the lawn, not on a sidewalk, patio or driveway.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Ziziphus jujuba*

**Pronunciation:** ZIZ-ih-fuss joo-JOO-buh

**Common name(s):** Chinese Date, Common Jujube, Chinese Jujube

**Family:** *Rhamnaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 9 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** fruit tree; no proven urban tolerance

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

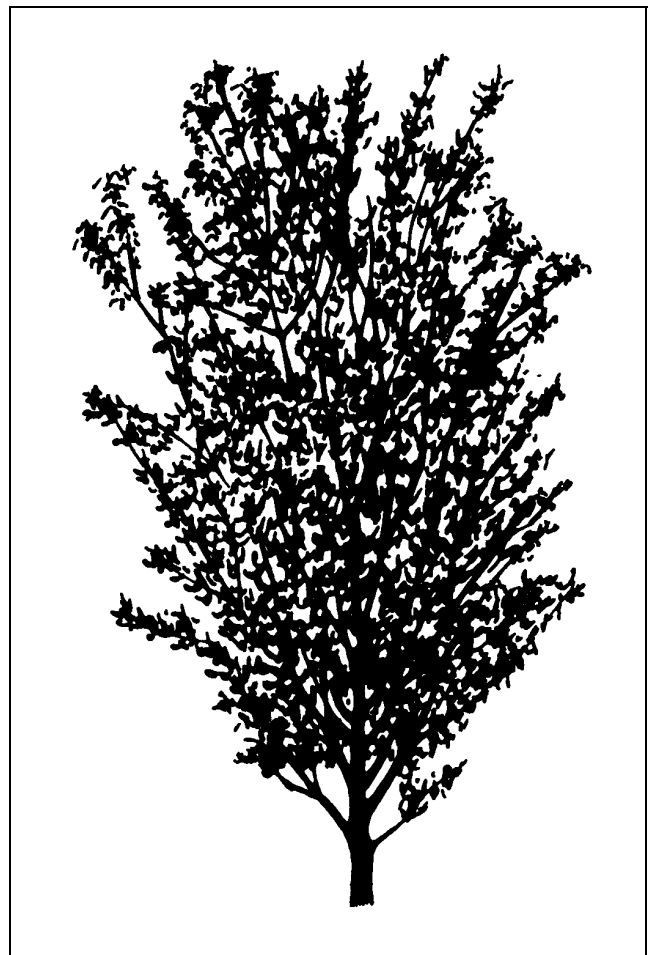


Figure 1. Young Chinese Date.

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-680, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 15 to 35 feet  
**Spread:** 10 to 30 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
**Crown shape:** oval; round  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** medium  
**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** crenate; serrulate  
**Leaf shape:** lanceolate; ovate  
**Leaf venation:** bowed  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** yellow  
**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval; round  
**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch  
**Fruit covering:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** black; red  
**Fruit characteristics:** attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; thorns are present on the trunk or branches  
**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** brown



Figure 3. Foliage of Chinese Date.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

**Current year twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

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

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline;  
acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

## Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** No entries found.

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be  
susceptible

**Pest resistance:** unknown

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

Chinese Jujube should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil, acid or alkaline. Plants do not do well on heavy clay or swampy soils.

Propagation is by seed, suckers, or grafting. Young plants transplant easily.