



## TREES & plants

# Japanese tree lilac

Japanese tree lilac is larger than the shrub lilacs and it blooms a little later. It produces large clusters of small creamy-white, fragrant flowers.

This plant has some cultivated varieties. [Go to list of cultivars.](#)

**Botanical name:** *Syringa reticulata subsp. reticulata*

**All Common Names:** Japanese tree lilac

**Family (English):** Olive

**Family (Botanic):** Oleaceae

**Planting Site:** Residential and parks, City parkway, Wide median, Restricted sites

**Tree or Plant Type:** Tree

**Foliage:** Deciduous (seasonally loses leaves)

**Native Locale:** Non-native

**Landscape Uses:** Parkway/street, Patio/sidewalk, Shade tree, Specimen

**Size Range:** Medium tree (25-40 feet), Small tree (15-25 feet)

**Mature Height:** 20-30 feet

**Mature Width:** 15-25 feet

**Light Exposure:** Full sun (6 hrs direct light daily)

**Hardiness Zones:** Zone 3, Zone 4, Zone 5 (Chicago), Zone 6, Zone 7

**Soil Preference:** Moist, well-drained soil

**Acid Soils:** Tolerant

**Alkaline Soils:** Tolerant

**Salt Spray:** Tolerant

**Soil Salt:** Tolerant

**Drought Conditions:** Intolerant

**Poor Drainage:** Intolerant

**Ornamental Interest:** Spring blossoms, Fragrant flowers, Showy fruit, Showy flowers, Attractive bark

**Season of Interest:** Late spring, Early summer

**Flower Color & Fragrance:** Fragrant, White

**Shape or Form:** Oval, Pyramidal, Round

**Growth Rate:** Moderate

**Transplants Well:** Yes

**Wildlife:** Butterflies, Hummingbirds, Insect pollinators

**More Information:**

**Tree & Plant Care**

Prune after flowering.



**Disease, pests, and problems**

Bacterial blight, leaf spots are possible.

**Disease, pest, and problem resistance**

Good resistance to powdery mildew, scale and borers.

**Native geographic location and habitat**

Native to Japan.

**Bark color and texture**

Reddish-brown, cherry-like bark with elongates lenticels.

**Leaf or needle arrangement, size, shape, and texture**

Simple leaves in pairs (opposite) on stems; ovate with a rounded base, dark green. Leaves fall in autumn with little color change (yellow green).

**Flower arrangement, shape, and size**

Small, creamy white, fragrant flowers held in large clusters (6 to 12 inches high). Flowers slightly later than the shrub lilacs.

**Japanese Tree Lilac (*Syringa reticulata*), fruit**

PHOTO: JOHN HAGSTROM

**Fruit, cone, nut, and seed descriptions**

Dry capsules, usually in large enough quantity that they add some interest to the late summer landscape.

**Cultivars and their differences****Golden Eclipse Japanese tree lilac** (*Syringa reticulata* ssp. *reticulata* 'Golden Eclipse');

A more compact form (to 24 feet high). Leaves develop gold edges as the season progresses.

**Ivory Pillar™ Japanese tree lilac** (*Syringa reticulata* ssp. *reticulata* 'Willamette'); A

more narrow, upright form (25 feet high by 15 feet wide).

**Ivory Silk Japanese tree lilac** (*Syringa reticulata* ssp. *reticulata* 'Ivory Silk'): More compact (20 to 25 feet high); flowers profusely and begins to flower at an early age.

**Signature™ Japanese tree lilac** (*Syringa reticulata* ssp. *reticulata* 'Sigzam'): Flower clusters more rounded and smaller than those of 'Ivory Silk'. Flowers a week or two later than 'Ivory Silk'.

**Snowdance™ Japanese tree lilac** (*Syringa reticulata* ssp. *reticulata* 'Bailnce'): Flowers at an early age and flowers very prolifically. 20 feet high and wide.



Location of *Syringa reticulata* subsp. *reticulata* (Japanese tree lilac) at the Arboretum