Japanese Star Anise

Illicium anisatum

Height: 19 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 6

Description:

Glossy evergreen foliage smells like anise when crushed; produces pretty star-shaped seeds that are toxic in quantity; makes a fine hedge or can be limbed up as a tree; prefers shade but can adapt to full sun with adequate moisture



Japanese Star Anise in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Japanese Star Anise flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Japanese Star Anise is primarily valued in the landscape for its ornamental upright and spreading habit of growth. It is clothed in stunning white star-shaped flowers with chartreuse eyes at the ends of the branches from early to mid spring. It has attractive green evergreen foliage. The fragrant narrow leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Japanese Star Anise is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Japanese Star Anise is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Japanese Star Anise will grow to be about 19 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It tends to be a little leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This shrub does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for sandy, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is native to parts of North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.