# Tung Oil Tree

***Vernicia fordii***



*Tung Oil Tree flowers*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

Height: 60 feet

Spread: 50 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Tungoil Tree, China Wood-Oil Tree, Kalo Nut Tree

**Description:**

A small to medium sized tree with a spreading crown; the bark is smooth and thin, and bleeds latex when cut; clusters of white flowers with red centers appear in spring before or with the leaves; leaves either heart shaped or lobed; an unusual accent tree

**Ornamental Features**

Tung Oil Tree is clothed in stunning clusters of white star-shaped flowers with red eyes and brick red veins at the ends of the branches in early spring before the leaves. It has green deciduous foliage. The large heart-shaped leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. It produces chartreuse berries with red blush in mid fall.

**Landscape Attributes**

Tung Oil Tree is a deciduous tree 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 tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

Tung Oil Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent
- Container Planting

**Planting & Growing**

Tung Oil Tree will grow to be about 60 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 50 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 5 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 90 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. 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. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from 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.

Tung Oil Tree is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.