

***Ternstroemia gymnanthera* Cleyera, Japanese Ternstroemia¹**

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Introduction

The dense, unusually dark green foliage takes on various shades of red depending upon the season and exposure but always remains shining and evergreen (Fig. 1). The small, white, fragrant flowers are borne in clusters at the leaf axils and are followed by yellow to dark red fruits, eventually splitting open to reveal shiny, black seeds which persist through the winter.

General Information

Scientific name: *Ternstroemia gymnanthera*

Pronunciation: tern-STROE-mee-uh
jim-NANTH-er-uh

Common name(s): cleyera, Japanese ternstroemia

Family: *Theaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

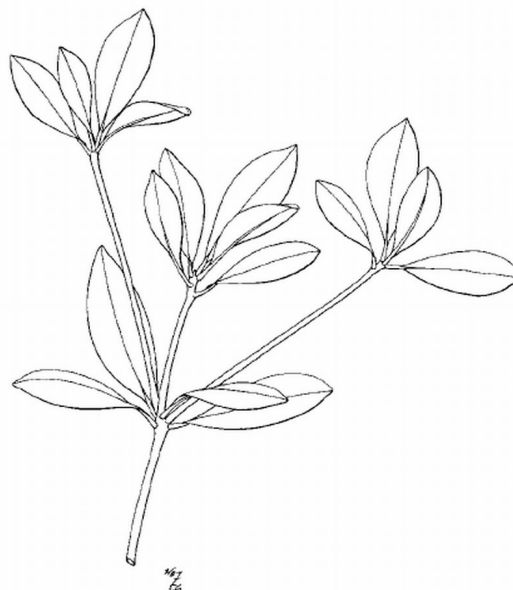


Figure 1. Cleyera

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10: year round

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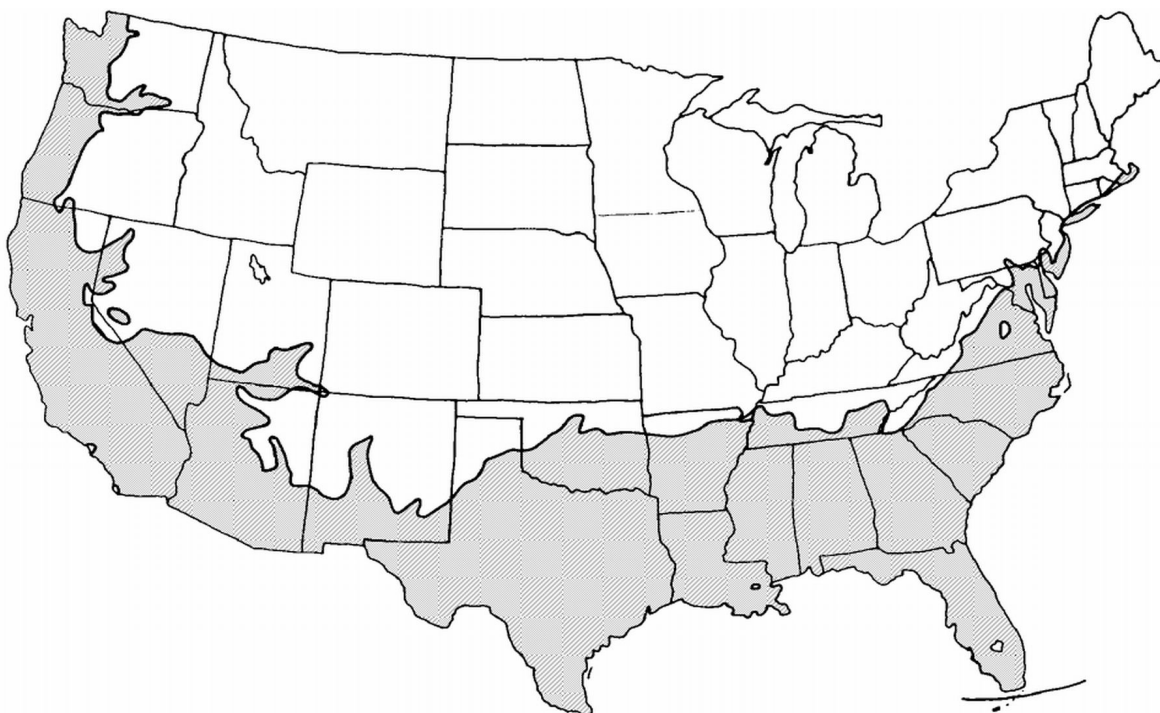


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: screen; border; near a deck or patio; specimen; superior hedge

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

Description

Height: 12 to 20 feet

Spread: 5 to 10 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin



Figure 3. Flower of cleyera

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; loam; slightly alkaline

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Cleyera is tolerant of full sun but grows best in partial shade in rich, moisture-retentive but well-drained, acid soil. The leaves will turn yellow if the soil is alkaline. Pruning is not usually necessary on slow-growing cleyera, but new growth may be pinched to encourage compactness, particularly in the shade. The clean, neat, upright growth of cleyera makes it a good choice as an accent plant as well as a screen or hedge. Plant on three- to five-foot centers to form a hedge of mass planting. Cleyera makes a good background plant for a shrub border that acts as a screen or wind break.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

Pests and Disease

Pest problems are rare on cleyera with scale being the only one of occasional significance.

No diseases are of major concern.