



Japanese Zelkova, *Zelkova serrata*

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Summary

Foliage: About 2 inches long; deciduous

Height: About 60 feet

Spread: About 40 feet

Shape: Vase shape

Main Features

Japanese zelkova is a medium to large shade tree with a distinct vase shape. This species is quite drought and heat tolerant; its use as a street tree species is testimony to its toughness. Fall foliage colors range from fair to quite good (orange to bronze-red to maroon) and will vary from tree to tree (seedling-grown trees) or from cultivar to cultivar. With age the bark exfoliates exposing orange and tan colors. Pruning young trees is obligatory since limbs in young trees tend to be clustered; developing a good branch structure when the tree is young will eliminate the need for more involved and costly pruning when trees are older. There are several cultivars in the trade (see Additional Information section).

Plant Needs

Zone: 5 to 8

Light: Full sun

Moisture: Average to somewhat dry

Soil type: Average

pH range: Acid to alkaline

Functions

Japanese zelkova serves as a medium to large shade tree. When planted in opposing parallel rows, the intersecting arching branches form a cathedral ceiling effect. As mentioned, this species is suitable for urban use.

Care

Other than the pruning requirement noted in the Main Features section, Japanese zelkova is a relatively low maintenance species with very few pest problems.

Additional Information

There are several cultivars of Japanese zelkova that vary in form/branch structure, growth rate, fall foliage color, and hardiness. Popular cultivars/clones include Green Vase, 'Halka', and Spring Grove.