

# Chinese Chestnut

*Castanea mollissima*

Asian Chestnut

Asiatic chestnuts including Chinese Chestnut have been introduced for re-forestation and nut culture purposes. Various hybrids of the Chinese Chestnut have been developed with some resistance (but not immunity) to chestnut blight. Chinese Chestnut fruit is sweet and somewhat larger than American Chestnut, but not as flavorful. The form is inferior to the American Chestnut as is the wood. Used as a landscape tree, it sports an interesting form, pretty flowers, and pleasing foliage. Chinese Chestnuts branch low to the ground making them prime candidates for climbing and for tree forts. They are slow growers.



## Identification

### Leaves

Deciduous, alternate, simple, pinnately veined, dark green, 5-6", hairy beneath. Yellow to bronze in fall.



### Bark/Wood

Gray brown to brown, strongly ridged and furrowed, but no distinguishable patterns.



### Flower/Fruit

Monoecious; white flowers borne on 4-5" long catkins in late spring. Edible brown, mostly round, 2-3 nuts enclosed in sharply spined bur.



### Form

Small tree with low branches and a rounded crown. Often multi-stemmed and somewhat twisted or contorted.



## Uses

Chinese Chestnut is almost exclusively used as a landscape tree. It is hybridized with American Chestnut in hopes of a blight resistant, valuable nut and/or timber tree.

## Ethnobotany

## Native Distribution

Northern China and Korea.

## Establishment

Fibrous root system can make the tree difficult to transplant.

## Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size 50'Hx50'Wx2'dbh  
 USDA Zone 5-8  
 Light Requirements Full Sun

Soils Acid  
 Drought Tolerant? Moderate  
 Inundation Tolerant? No

## Pests/Damaging Agents

Resistant, but not immune to chestnut blight. Boring and sucking insects can be a problem, but rarely fatal.

## Similar Species

American Chestnut  
 American Chestnut leaves are terminally very pointed and narrow at the base; Chinese Chestnut is rounded at base. Chinese Chestnut trunk is generally contorted or twisted; American Chestnut straight.

## Propagation

Seed.

## Source(s)

Seed collected from Cornell Plantation, NY.