

# CHINESE PISTACHE

## *Pistacia chinensis*



### Characteristics

- Type: Tree
- Zone: 6 to 9
- Height: 30.00 to 35.00 feet
- Spread: 20.00 to 30.00 feet
- Bloom colors: Green
- Bloom Time: April
- Flower: Insignificant
- Sun: Full sun
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Medium
- Leaf: Good Fall
- Fruit: Showy
- Tolerate: Drought, Air Pollution
- Earth-Kind®
- Texas Superstar® Plant

### Culture

For many years this tree has been highly recommended by horticultural experts at Texas A&M, Oklahoma State and Kansas State universities. The first shade tree to receive the coveted Earth-Kind® designation from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service for its high levels of genetic resistance to insect and disease problems. Although considered by many experts to be near perfect for this area of the U.S., the Chinese pistache does have a couple of minor faults. First, young pistache in 5-gallon containers (a nice size to purchase) are often rather awkward and gangling in appearance. Rest assured that after 5–6 years of tender loving care in your landscape, this “ugly duckling” will have been magically transformed into a most “beautiful swan” as its canopy develops and begins to mature. Secondly, shaping and pruning your tree when it's young may be necessary to encourage proper branch spacing and structure and for best crown development. Even without such pruning however, the vast majority of pistache will eventually make very nicely shaped trees on their own. Grow in moist, organically rich, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates light shade, but best in full sun. Tolerates heat, drought and a wide range of soils. Proper pruning in early years recommended to create a symmetrical tree with good form.

### Noteworthy Characteristics

*Pistacia chinensis*, commonly called pistachio or Chinese pistache, is native to China, Taiwan and the Philippines. It is a small deciduous tree. Foliage consists of compound, even-pinnate, dark green leaves (to 10” long), each leaf typically having 10-12 lanceolate leaflets (to 4” long). Foliage is aromatic when bruised. Fall color is variable but often appears in quality shades of yellow, orange and red. Trees are dioecious (separate male and female trees), with flowers appearing in April in visible but somewhat inconspicuous green panicles. Pollinized flowers on female trees give rise to red-ripening-to-blue spherical fruits (drupes to 1/4” diameter) that ripen in fall. Drupes are inedible (*Pistacia vera* produces the edible pistachio nuts). Gray-brown bark peels to reveal salmon inner bark. Plants have naturalized in small areas of California, Texas, Alabama and Georgia.

### Problems

No serious insect or disease problems.

### Garden Uses

Street tree. Shade tree. Small landscape specimen for patio or garden.