

WINTER HONEYSUCKLE

Lonicera fragrantissima



Characteristics

- Type: Shrub
- Zone: 4 to 8
- Height: 6.00 to 10.00 feet
- Spread: 6.00 to 10.00 feet
- Bloom Time: March to April
- Bloom Description: Creamy white
- Sun: Full sun to part shade
- Water: Dry to medium
- Maintenance: Low
- Suggested Use: Hedge
- Flower: Showy, Fragrant
- Attracts: Birds, Bees
- Fruit: Showy
- Tolerate: Deer, Drought, Erosion, Clay Soil, Dry Soil, Black Walnut

Culture

Beloved for its extraordinarily fragrant winter blooms, *Lonicera fragrantissima* is a bushy deciduous shrub. In late winter to early spring, a profusion of highly fragrant short-lived creamy white flowers line up along each stem before leaves emerge. The budded branches may be cut for fragrance or indoor arrangements. The flowers give way to small red berries which mature in late spring or early summer. Winter Honeysuckle can fit in today's smaller landscapes when used as a cutback shrub. Because it blooms early on growth from last year, it can be cut back close to the ground right after flowering and allowed to grow and flower the next winter. In addition to being a great ornamental, it is an excellent winter nectar source for honey bees and is effective for winter garden fragrance. Easily grown in average, dry to medium, well-drained soil in full sun to part shade. Adapts to wide range of soils, including dry ones, but prefers moist, loamy soils. Prune to shape after flowering.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Lonicera fragrantissima, commonly called winter honeysuckle or fragrant honeysuckle, is a somewhat stiff-branched, deciduous shrub with a bushy, spreading habit. Typically grows 6-10' tall and as wide. Extremely fragrant (lemony), short-tubed, creamy white flowers appear in early spring before the leaves emerge. Flowers are followed by small, somewhat inconspicuous, red berries which mature in late spring to early summer. Oval, dark green foliage sometimes has bluish tinge. Flowers are a harbinger of spring. Budded branches may be cut for an early, fragrant, indoor arrangement.

Genus name honors Adam Lonitzer (1528-1586), German botanist, the author of an herbal (*Kreuterbuch*) many times reprinted between 1557 and 1783. Specific epithet means very fragrant.

Problems

This plant is listed as a noxious weed in one or more Midwestern states and should not be moved or grown under conditions that would involve danger of dissemination. No serious insect or disease problems.

Garden Uses

Clipped or informal hedge, screen or background plant in a shrub border.

Courtesy of Missouri Botanical Society Plant Finder