

Japanese Camellia (*Camellia japonica*)

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Summary:

Foliage: Evergreen broadleaf

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 10 feet

Shape: Upright, dense

Japanese camellia is a dense and formal-appearing large shrub/small tree suitable for USDA plant hardiness zones 7 to 9. Foliage is a glossy, dark-green. Large flowers, ranging from white to pink to red, bloom from winter to spring.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 7 to 9

Light: Partial shade is ideal

Moisture: Moist to average

Soil Type: Sandy or loam

pH Range: 3.7 to 6.5

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include screen, border, massing, and specimen plant.

Planting Notes:

Plant in an organic, moist, well-drained, acid soil.

Plant in a partially shady location, protected from winter wind to prevent leaf scorch.

Cold temperatures (i.e., 0 degrees F) in Zones 7 and 8 may kill or delay flower buds.

Care:

Mulch to protect shallow roots.

Water thoroughly once a week in hot, dry weather.

Prune in spring after flowering; however, dead wood can be pruned anytime during the year.

Maintenance required to control scale insects.

Problems:

Various insects and diseases are problems including scale insects and twig die back.

Not salt tolerant. Plant may be injured by exposure to salt.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Related species:

Sasanqua camellia (*Camellia sasanqua*) is somewhat less hardy but has larger, showier flowers (September to December) than Japanese camellia.

A significant amount of breeding work has been done to develop "cold hardy" camellias. An article in the International Camellia Society web site (<http://camellia-ics.org/ics/ackerm1.htm>), "Camellias for Cold Climates" by William L Ackerman, lists cold hardy camellia cultivars. Some of the listed cultivars are claimed to be hardy to minus 15 degrees F.

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