

Lonicera xylosteum - Fly Honeysuckle (*Caprifoliaceae*)

Lonicera xylosteum is a tough, utilitarian shrub known for emerging and mature gray-green foliage, compact rounded habit of some cultivars, and urban and salt spray tolerance.

FEATURES

Form



- medium shrub
- to 8' tall x 8' wide but frequently pruned much smaller
- radiating mound
- slow to medium rate

Culture

- full sun to partial shade
- urban tolerant and very adaptable, especially to poor soils, soil pHs, restricted root zones, drought, salt spray, and heavy pruning, but is not tolerant of wet sites or poorly drained sites
- propagated primarily by rooted stem cuttings
- Honeysuckle Family, with virtually no disease or pest problems
- low availability, in containers or B&B form

Foliage

- gray-green
- deciduous
- opposite
- elliptical
- short petiole
- one of the earliest shrubs to leaf out
- buds and young foliage emerging with silvery hairs and remaining pubescent
- green tinged with purple



Flowers

- white to cream
- in May and effective for 2 weeks
- flowers borne upright with 4 per node
- not as showy as other Honeysuckles but still attractive

Fruits

- virtually no fruit set

Twigs

- tan to white-brown
- winter buds extend out at a 45 degree angle
- rather stout, zigzag, and slightly rough

Trunk

- not applicable

USAGE

Function

- informal or formal hedge
- border, entranceway, low screen, or specimen shrub
- parking lot or street island small shrub
- can be a facer shrub if kept pruned

Texture

- medium texture in foliage and when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare

Assets

- densely rounded habit
- foliage emerging gray-green to silvery-green
- urban tolerant, including exceptional salt spray and drought tolerance
- spring flowers
- low maintenance plant

Liabilities

- poor autumn color (but holds green foliage late)
- some of the "compact" cultivars can eventually get quite spreading and tall if left unpruned

Habitat

- Zone 4
- Native to Europe

SELECTIONS

Alternates

- shrubs for urban stress situations (species of *Berberis*, *Forsythia*, *Lonicera*, *Viburnum*, *Weigela*, etc.)
- shrubs with a tight growth habit that grow slowly (*Berberis* 'Crimson Pygmy', *Buxus* hybrids, *Fothergilla gardenii*, *Picea abies* [shrub forms], *Viburnum plicatum* var. *tomentosum* 'Newport' [Nanum Newport'], etc.)
- winter salt-spray-tolerant companion plants (*Hamamelis*, *Myrica pensylvanica*, etc.)

Cultivars - Variants - Related species

- Lonicera xylosteum* 'Compacta' ('Emerald Mound') - blue-green mature foliage, mounding to 3' as a low informal hedge with low maintenance
- Lonicera* x *xylosteoides* 'Clavey's Dwarf' - hybrid of Fly and Tatarian (*Lonicera tatarica*) Honeysuckles; up to 6' tall, used as a medium-sized informal hedge that needs little maintenance; this cultivar is often incorrectly treated as *Lonicera xylosteum* 'Clavey's Dwarf'

-*Lonicera japonica* - Japanese Honeysuckle - vigorous vine or twisting groundcover, adorned with fragrant white and light yellow flowers all summer long; good choice for a quick vine or an erosion control groundcover

-*Lonicera maackii* - Amur Honeysuckle - probably the most invasive shrub in northern climates, being readily seeded near any perching site by birds; habit is an arching vase (15' x 15') that flowers prolifically (and somewhat fragrantly) in May-June, and sets many red fruits in Sept., maturing and devoured by late Nov. by birds (Do Not Use! see *plantNote* on this species)