

Pieris japonica - Japanese Pieris (*Ericaceae*)

Pieris japonica is an upright, ornamental shrub. Japanese Pieris is noted for emerging bronzed foliage, dark evergreen mature leaves, tiered branching, and showy white, droopy flower clusters in late winter.

FEATURES

Form



- medium shrub
- to 10' tall x 8' wide but often smaller
- upright columnar in youth, becoming a spreading mound with age, somewhat tiered branching, with branching to the ground

-slow rate

Culture

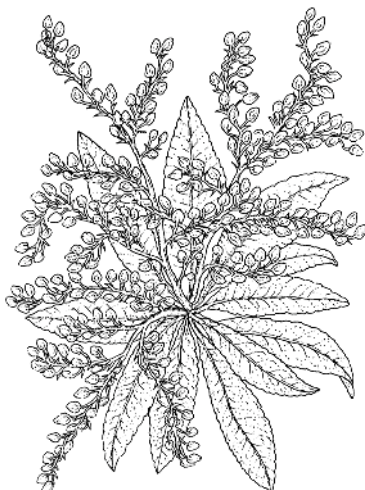
- partial to full shade
- prefers a moist, rich, well-drained, slightly acid soil
- intolerant of full sun (in winter) and soil compaction

Foliage

- evergreen, dark green
- alternate along stem becoming clustered at stem termini
- obovate with a cuneate base narrowing to a yellow petiole
- entire margins
- glabrous (shiny)
- new growth at first red or bronzed, becoming light green then eventually dark green



Flowers



- white to creamy
- effective for 2-3 weeks in Mar.-Apr. and very showy
- pendulous branched inflorescences to 6" long
- each flower inverted urn-shaped and contrasting with the dark evergreen foliage
- floral buds form in previous summer and are attractive as immature inflorescences during winter

Fruits

- not showy but noticeable
- brown 5-valved capsules

Twigs

- yellow-red stems changing to dark gray branches, lightly furrowed and mottled with patches of silver
- buds very small and tan

Trunk

- dark gray
- furrowed to platy

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Function

- foundation plant, usually as a specimen shrub

Texture

- fine texture
- thick density

Assets

- attractive year-round evergreen foliage
- showy white inflorescences in late winter and very early spring
- bronzed new foliage in early spring
- branching to the ground

Liabilities

- intolerance of full sun (winter desiccation)
- lace bug problems (sucks juice from leaves and causes yellowing)
- winter dieback often aided by phytophthora infestations on the stems
- chlorosis due to alkaline pH and iron deficiency

Habitat

- Zone 5
- Native to Japan

SELECTIONS

Alternates

- broadleaf evergreen shrubs (*Buxus* hybrids, *Kalmia latifolia*, *Rhododendron* species, *Yucca filamentosa*, etc.)
- shrubs with late winter or early spring flowers (*Chaenomeles speciosa*, *Cornus mas*, *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta', *Hamamelis vernalis*, etc.)

Cultivars - Variants - Related species

- P. japonica* 'Dorothy Wycoff' - dark red floral buds emerge as light pink flowers
- P. japonica* 'Mountain Fire' - fiery new foliage is a brilliant red instead of bronzed; perhaps the most common cultivar
- P. japonica* 'Purity' - larger pure-white flowers on compact plants that bloom at an early age
- P. japonica* 'Red Mill' - emergent red leaves mature to dark green but are thick and leathery, white flowers last a week longer than normal, possesses a dense growth habit, and reportedly disease and pest resistant
- P. japonica* 'Scarlett O'Hara' - white flowers on a narrow upright growth habit
- P. japonica* 'Variegata' - young foliage emerges red, maturing to green with creamy-white leaf margins

-*Pieris* 'Brouwer's Beauty' - compact hybrid (of *Pieris japonica* and *Pieris floribunda*) which is spreading, more resistant to lace bug, more tolerant of alkaline soil pH, and has purplish-pink floral buds

