



Japanese Pieris *Pieris japonica*

Alex X. Niemiera, Professor, School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

Summary:

Foliage: Lustrous leaves about 2.5 inches long; evergreen

Height: About 10 feet tall (after many years)

Spread: About 6 feet wide (after many years)

Shape: Upright oval

Main features: Japanese pieris is an attractive slow-growing broad-leaved evergreen with showy flowers, clusters of dainty pendulous flowers, in March/April and somewhat showy flower buds in fall/winter. There are several cultivars of this species (see Additional Information section). Plants perform the best, and are least stressed, when grown in protected, shady sites; this is especially true for plants in the southern portion of its adaptability (zone 6 and 7). Stressed plants (e.g., too much sun, drought, wind-swept sites) are often afflicted by pest problems (see Care section) that warrant chemical application.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 4to7

Light: Grows best in shade, especially in zones 6 and 7

Moisture: Moist to average

Soil type: Well-drained with ample organic matter

pH range: Acid

Functions:

Japanese pieris is well suited in mass, in a foundation planting, border planting, or inter-mixed with other broad-leaved evergreens.

Care:

Stressed plants (e.g., too much sun, heat and drought, windy locations) are especially prone to lace bug, an insect that sucks the sap from leaves. The symptom for lace bug infestation is a mottling (small white dots) on leaves; ultimately leaves will turn yellow/white or brown.

Additional Information:

There are several Japanese pieris cultivars in the trade. They primarily vary in form, flower and foliage characteristics. Some of the common cultivars are:

`Cavatine' dwarf form with long-lasting white flowers

`Compacta' compact form with small leaves

`Dorothy Wyckoff' very attractive compact form with dark red flower buds that make a showy fall and winter display

`Mountain Fire' new foliage in spring is brilliant red

`Prelude' dwarf form with long-lasting white flowers

'Red Mill' new foliage in spring is brilliant red; long flowering period 'Sarabande' dwarf habit with pink flower buds that open to white flowers 'Valley Valentine' maroon flower buds that open to rose-pink flowers 'Variegata' variegated with white margins on green leaves
'White Cascade' very showy flower show due to long pendulous clusters of long-lasting white flowers