

Diospyros lotus
date-plum, Caucasian persimmon, lilac persimmon



Diospyros lotus (Date-plum, Caucasian persimmon, lilac persimmon) is native to large areas of China but has long been widespread towards Western Asia and the Mediterranean region, ever since ancient times, making it one of the oldest cultivated plants. In its native habitat the tree can reach a height of around twenty metres; in cultivation this is often limited to between eight and twelve metres with a semi-open, egg-shaped and irregularly growing crown which can develop to eight metres in width with maturity. A specimen planted in 1740 can be admired at the Hortus Botanicus in Leiden in the Netherlands.

Diospyros lotus has magnificent and healthy, tapered, glossy dark green foliage with a light green hairy underside. In the autumn the foliage changes to a wonderful yellow. In June, female date plums bear inconspicuous white-pink flowers in clusters with a large calyx. Male specimens bear the same flowers but in brown. Female trees produce yellow plums which turn purple to blue-black as they ripen around October or November. The fruits resemble tomatoes but at a mere two to three centimetres they are smaller than those of *Diospyros kaki* and can have a sweet to slightly sour taste. Aside from being edible for humans, birds and small mammals, they are also suitable for pickling and drying. *Diospyros lotus* has yellow-brown shoots with black buds and in maturity highly grooved bark with rectangular peeling plates.

Diospyros lotus requires a nutritious, moist and well-drained soil in sun/part shade, and preferably sheltered from the wind. The date plum is hardy but juvenile plants can sometimes be prone to frost in winter. The tree can recover well however. *Diospyros lotus* is extremely suitable for planting in food forests, gardens, parks and central reservations. Fruiting profusely, the tree is less suited for use in street plantings.

TYPES OF PLANTING
Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

USE
Location: park, central reservation, large garden, small garden, cemetery | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: food forest

CHARACTERISTICS
Crown shape: egg-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 8 - 12 m | **Width**: 4 - 8 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 7B - 10B

ASPECTS
Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, birds, small mammals, humans

PLANTKENMERKEN
Flowers: bell-shaped, discrete, small | **Flower colour**: white-pink, brown | **Flowering period**: June - June | **Leaf colour**: dark green, underside pale green | **Leaves**: deciduous, lanceolate, polished, underside hairy | **Autumn colour**: yellow | **Fruits**: striking, edible, small, plum | **Fruit colour**: yellow, blue-black | **Bark colour**: grey | **Bark**: peeling, furrowed | **Twig colour**: yellow-brown | **Twigs**: bare | **Root system**: shallow, highly branched

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