

# *Heptacodium miconioides*
## Seven-son flower, Autumn lilac



*Heptacodium miconioides* (Seven-son flower, Autumn lilac) was discovered by English plant collector and botanist Ernest Wilson in the Chinese province Hubei in July 1907, and then described by the German botanist Alfred Rehder. The tree wasn't distributed until 1980, by seeds from the botanical garden in Hangzhou, China. The seven-son flower is rarely found in nature, and occurs in small populations in the Chinese provinces Anhui and Zhejiang. What is remarkable about this tree is that it grows to be larger in cultivation than in nature. The species grows to a maximum of 8 metres tall, and 6 metres wide. It forms an irregular, round to vase-shaped crown.

The cream-white bark of the *Heptacodium miconioides* that peels off in long sheets is lovely to see year-round, but is particularly striking in winter. The tree has a tropical look to it with three parallel, reddish veins on dark green, smooth-edged and undulating leaves. The foliage sometimes turns a purply green in autumn. Despite Alfred Rehder calling the species Heptacodium (*Hepta* meaning 'seven' in Greek), each panicle has six flowers. The buds already appear in June, after which the fragrant flowers appear in late August, and stay on the tree until early October. With its late, rich blossoms, the species is not only beautiful for people to see; it is also very valuable to bees. After blooming, the tree bears striking, red-violet fruit that stays on the tree for a long time.

*Heptacodium miconioides* is often used as a multi-stem tree in gardens and park-like settings, where the tree adds great decorative value all year long. However, the species is also suitable for use as a standard tree or a low shrub, and can even be cut as a bonsai. The seven-on flower is healthiest when it can grow in moist, humous, but permeable soil, can handle drought quite well and is not susceptible to any plagues or diseases. Though the tree can tolerate quite a lot of shade, the fruit will only turn red in sunny environments.

**SEASONAL COLOURS**

jan feb mar apr mei jun jul aug sep okt nov dec

**TYPES OF PLANTING**

**Tree types**: standard trees, half-stem trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

**USE**

**Location**: park, central reservation, large garden, small garden, patio, cemetery | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: urban planting

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**Crown shape**: wide vase-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 4 - 8 m | **Width**: 3 - 6 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 5A - 9B

**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**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, butterflies, birds, nectar value 1, pollen value 0 | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness

**PLANTKENMERKEN**

**Flowers**: panicle, striking, standing, flower-scented | **Flower colour**: white | **Flowering period**: August - October | **Leaf colour**: dark green | **Leaves**: deciduous, lanceolate, matt polished, undulate | **Autumn colour**: brown, violet | **Fruits**: striking, berry | **Fruit colour**: red-violet | **Bark colour**: golden yellow, pale brown | **Bark**: peeling | **Twig colour**: golden yellow | **Twigs**: bare | **Root system**: shallow

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