

Tetrapanax papyrifer

Rice-paper plant



Tetrapanax papyrifer (Chinese rice-paper plant) comes from Taiwan and Southern China. This plant was described in 1852 by William Hooker, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England. The small, multi-stem tree or large shrub grows between three and seven metres tall and two to three metres wide. Individual stems have no side shoots and only have leaves on the top.

The spectacular, architectural effect that makes *Tetrapanax papyrifer* so desirable - especially for projects requiring a tropical look - are the enormous leaves that can grow to a metre in diameter. The Chinese rice-paper plant often loses its leaves in winter. In milder weather, the plant is evergreen and from August until October produces ivy-like, white-green sprays of flowers, revealing the fact that the plant belongs to the *Araliaceae* (ivy family). The flowers smell of honey and are highly prized by insects. Striking, black berries form in the autumn. *Tetrapanax papyrifer* has a light brown, slightly furrowed bark and heavily branched, hairy stems. Rice paper is produced from the firm, woody stems; hence its common name.

Tetrapanax papyrifer is used to create the ultimate exotic look. Since the plant spreads by suckers, it may produce a veritable jungle wherever it is planted. The shrub thrives in hot summers and is hardy down to about -12 degrees Celsius (may take even lower in sheltered sites) but often re-shoots from the roots even if the sections above ground are frozen. *Tetrapanax papyrifer* is a true show stopper in the garden where it prefers a moist soil and shelter from the wind.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: characteristic trees, solitary shrubs

USE

Location: in containers, roof garden, large garden, small garden, patio, cemetery | **Pavement:** none

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: vase-shaped | **Crown structure:** open | **Height:** 3 - 7 m | **Width:** 2 - 3 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 8A - 13B

ASPECTS

Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil, all soils | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** moist, wet | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** neutral | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees | **Extreme environments:** tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, heads, striking, scented | **Flower colour:** white-green | **Flowering period:** August - October | **Leaf colour:** green, underside felt white | **Leaves:** semi-evergreen, palmate, big, wide, pendant, hairy, underside hairy | **Fruits:** striking, berry | **Fruit colour:** black | **Bark colour:** pale brown | **Bark:** slightly furrowed | **Twig colour:** pale brown | **Twigs:** hairy, vertical branches, thickly branched, long shoots | **Root system:** shallow,

