

Zanthoxylum simulans
Chinese Prickly Ash, Chinese-pepper, flatspine prickly-ash



Zanthoxylum simulans (Sichuan pepper, synonym *Xanthoxylum simulans*) comes from the eastern provinces of China and Taiwan. The species was discovered and described in around 1690 but not brought to Kew Gardens in England until 1869 by Sir Henry F. Hance - the then British consul in China. As a small tree to large shrub, the Sichuan pepper can reach an ultimate height of around three to six metres tall and equally as wide. The species has a capricious crown form; as a juvenile it is umbrella-shaped and later more rounded.

The young twigs of *Zanthoxylum simulans* are full of razor-sharp and curved thorns. On older branches and stems, the robust thorns change into polygonal or blunt bulges. The stems are grey-green, and on older trees a yellow underbark is visible through vertical fissures in the trunk. The Sichuan pepper produces yellow-green flower clusters in June. The pinnate leaves consist of seven to eleven ovoid glossy leaflets with a fresh green colour, changing over to a yellow-orange glow in autumn. It creates a stunning effect with the small red fruits which then appear on the tree. When bruised, the foliage gives off a fresh lemon aroma and the fruits also have a discernible, peppery smell, are sharp tasting and with a narcotic effect.

Zanthoxylum simulans is easy to grow, not particular about the soil, is not prone to diseases and is very hardy. In the summer filtered light falls attractively through the composite leaf and bees find nectar in the flowers; in the autumn the fragrant foliage and berries are useful for culinary purposes. The species has a terrific winter silhouette thanks to the whimsical growth habit and thorns, and these thorns provide good shelter for birds and the berries are a true delicacy for them too. This large shrub or small tree makes an attractive addition to parks and gardens. But also in containers - protected from the strongest wind - even on roof gardens *Zanthoxylum simulans* is a good choice.

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, woodland planting stock, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella | **Topiary**: hedge

USE

Location: park, in containers, roof garden, large garden, small garden | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: food forest, Eco planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: vase-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 5 - 7 m | **Width**: 4 - 6 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 6A - 8B

ASPECTS

Wind: intolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant**: bees, birds, nectar value 5, pollen value 5 | **Extreme environments**: tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: panicle, infundibular, discrete, small | **Flower colour**: yellow-green | **Flowering period**: June - June | **Leaf colour**: green | **Leaves**: deciduous, polished, a bit prickly, scented with contusion, pinnate | **Autumn colour**: yellow, yellow-orange | **Fruits**: small, aromatic | **Fruit colour**: red | **Bark colour**: grey-brown | **Bark**: slightly furrowed | **Twig colour**: grey-brown | **Twigs**: thorned, with lenticels, horizontal branches, pendulous, long shoots | **Root system**: shallow, fine roots

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