

Syringia reticulata – Japanese Tree Lilac

Syringia reticulata, commonly known as Japanese Tree Lilac is a beautiful frost hardy, fragrant deciduous tree that is found naturally in Japan and east Asia. It is one of the finest small specimen trees available, with frothy upright panicles of creamy white flowers in early summer; interesting steel-gray bark, a delightful fragrance and a neat, upright habit, a perfect choice for smaller home landscapes in full sun and well-drained soil. Add to this the ability to take the urban sprawl – small spaces, smog, compacted soil powerlines.

Japanese Tree lilac grows to some 8m in height and 6m in width in time, with an attractive regular form. It normally grows as a multi-trunked tree but can be restricted to a single trunk. Foliage is neat in a deep green turning to a dull yellow gold in the Autumn. Bark is cherry-like; an attractive reddish. In the late Spring and early Summer the tree is covered in a mass of ranked panicles of fragrant brilliant white flowers.

Syringia reticulata is best in full sun in a sandy or sandy loam soil with good moisture, but it can take a range of soils. It is ultimately frost hardy taking temperatures to at least -30°C, however it is a tree for the cooler climate and does not do well in tropical or subtropical situations. It can take heavy pruning and shaping and has a high resistance to all forms of urban pollution. It is easily grown from stratified seed.

Propagation

Soak seed in room temperature water for 24 hours then cold stratify seed for 8 weeks by placing in a ziplock bag with lightly wet sterilised peat moss or vermiculite. Place the bag in the refrigerator in the crisperator. Check each few days to maintain moisture. Remove any germinated seed and sow immediately.

Upon completing stratification sow the seed in a good quality seed raising mix at a temperature of about 20°C. Sow the seed to a depth of about 1cm. Keep lightly moist.

Prick young seedlings out into separate containers when large enough to handle and grow on a desired.