

Potential New Ornamental Plants from China

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Significance to the Industry: New ornamental plants are the new blood for our nursery industry. For introduction of new ornamental plants, especially with the pressure of the invasive plant issue, we should select the best ones for our markets. Hopefully the industry will benefit from our new introductions and increase its market share with new plants from China.

Nature of Work: "It is safe to say that there is no garden in this country or in Europe that is without its Chinese representatives and these rank among the finest of tree, shrub and vine." said E. H. "Chinese" Wilson (4). Obviously, the interest in and demand for good Chinese garden plants are high in this country. With this idea in our minds, the authors visited China five times with focus on ornamental plants for the past three years. Although the ornamental horticultural industry is just beginning in China, the potential resources of ornamental plants are great.

The trips included 12 Botanical Gardens, 10 Ornamental Research Institutions and Universities and eight remote mountainous areas. The plant materials with ornamental potential (3, 4, 5, 6) were too much to mention in this paper and the following plants are some examples for your reference. These plants were selected by comparing their ornamental features and landscape performance with their closely related ornamental plants in US landscape (2). Inputs from plant lovers are greatly appreciated.

All photos are posted on <http://www.umaine.edu/maineplants/sna04dz.pdf>.

Results and Discussion:

1. Wild Collections (natural plant resource with great ornamental potentials)

Illicium angustisepalum (l. *jiadifengpi*) is an evergreen shrub, which distributes on from 600-2000 meters (2000-6000 feet) above sea level. For its dark green foliage and dense branches. Maybe hardy to USDA Zone (5)6.

Pentaphylax euryoidesis is an evergreen shrub or small tree, distributed from 600-1600 meters (2000-5000 feet). For its colorful new growth. Maybe hardy to Zone 6.

Podocarpus nerrifolius is a close relative of *P. macrophyllus*. However, its leaves are twice as broader and longer than *P. macrophyllus*. It is a small evergreen tree and maybe hardy to Zone 7.

2. Selections from Wild and Cultivated Population

Acer fabri 'Emerald Jade' is a new selection from a trial garden. It is a evergreen

plant (deep green, glossy foliage) with red winged schizocarp all year round. Maybe hardy to Zone 7.

Ailanthus altissima 'Hongye' (means "red leaves"): No one wants one more Tree of Heaven. However, the vivid foliage is attractive. This new mutation from an *Ailanthus altissima* 'Thousand Leaders' population should have some potential to replace its species. Hardy to Zone 5. Photos were provided by Mr. Zhanchao Liu.

Celtis julianae 'Jinye' (means "golden leaves") is a selection from seedling population with golden foliage. Hardy to Zone 5. Photos were provided by Ms. Xuan Huang and Dr. Liangjun Zhao.

Fagus grandifolia 'Shimin' ("Shimin" is the name of a person, who discovered the plant) is a new variegated selection from a cultivated population. Nothing is special, but variegated leaves. Hardy to Zone 3.

Loropetalum chinense var. *rubrum* 'Prostrata' is a new selection for its horizontal growth habit and slow growth rate. Hardy to Zone 6. Photos were provided by Mr. Xiaoming Wang.

Magnolia grandiflora 'Green Jade' is a selection from seedling populations without brown pubescence below. Like *M. grandiflora* 'Mgtig', but much clean leaves. Maybe hardy to Zone 7.

Nageia nagi 'Sliver Strap' (syn. *Podocarpus nagi*) is a selection from a seedling population. Maybe hardy to Zone 7.

Osmanthus fragrans 'Xiangxiu' (means Hunan Embroidery, the leaf texture likes "Hunan Embroidery"). The plant was also called 'Jinbian' (means "Golden Margin"). Variegated leaves with purple new growth. About Zone 7. Two photos were provided by Mr. Xiaoming Wang.

Robinia pseudoacacia 'Swimming Dragon' is a mutation from a plantation. The plant is unique for its twisted and inermous branches (white flowers). Hardy to Zone 4 (3).

Robinia pseudoacacia 'Red Dragon' is a selection with red flowers and inermous twigs. Hardy to Zone 4 (3). One photo was provided by Ms. Xuan Huang.

Robinia pseudoacacia 'Honghua' (means "red flower") is a selection from a seedling population. This cultivar has dark pink flower and bloom twice a year in Central China. Hardy to Zone 5. Photos were provided by Mr. Zhanchao Liu.

Syringa pекinensis 'Beijing Huang' (means "yellow flower from Beijing") is a selection from seedling population for its golden flower color. The loaded flower is very attractive during the bloom season in May in Beijing, China. Hardy to Zone 4. The photo was provided by Dr. Dongyan Hu.

Ziziphus jujuba 'Longzhao' (means "dragon's claw") is a natural mutation with contorted branches. Also, its fruit is edible and very popular in China. Maybe hardy to Zone 6. Hybrids (both natural and artificial ones)

Lonicera × *longhuii* 'White Cloud' is a selection from a hybrid complex (majorly from *L. hypoglauca* and *L. macranthoides*). Loaded flower buds with white petals never bloom. Maybe hardy to Zone 6.

Lonicera × longhuii 'Xiaoming' is a new selection by Mr. Xiaoming Wang for its flower buds. The loaded flower buds (never open) could be harvested and dried for tea. Although it grows commercially for herb medicine in China, it is a plant with great ornamental. Evergreen if hardy, may be deciduous in Zone 6.

Prunus davidiana 'BBG#1' (Beijing Botanical Garden Breeding Program, Selection #1) is selected for its upright form. Hardy to Zone 4. Photos were provided by Dr. Dongyan Hu.

Prunus davidiana 'BBG#2' (Beijing Botanical Garden Breeding Program, Selection #2) is selected for its pendulous branches. Hardy to Zone 4. Photos were provided by Dr. Dongyan Hu.

New ornamental plants from China are far more than we mentioned above. How to further explore the potential ornamental plants, how to bring these plants back to US, and how to collectively market these plants should be addressed. We sincerely look forward to your suggestion and collaboration.

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