

Parrotia persica Persian Parrotia¹

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INTRODUCTION

This 20 to 40-foot-high deciduous tree forms a low-branched, rounded silhouette, 20 to 35 feet wide, and often has multiple trunks, although it can be trained to a single trunk (Fig. 1). The flowers which appear before the leaves in spring are somewhat interesting, showing no petals just a profusion of relatively inconspicuous deep crimson stamens. Fruits are not set in abundance and are of little consequence. But it is the foliage of Persian Parrotia which attracts the most attention, unfolding as reddish-purple young leaves, maturing to a lustrous, dark green through the summer, and then finally putting on a brilliant fall display of various hues of vivid yellow, burnt orange, and deep, pure scarlet. Even in winter Persian Parrotia is a striking landscape element, the much-branched canopy and multiple trunks finally able to clearly display their attractive peeling bark and spectacular form. Trunk and bark character can be displayed year-round by removing lower branches and foliage.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Parrotia persica*

Pronunciation: par-ROE-tee-uh PER-sih-kuh

Common name(s): Persian Parrotia

Family: *Hamamelidaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; shade tree; narrow tree

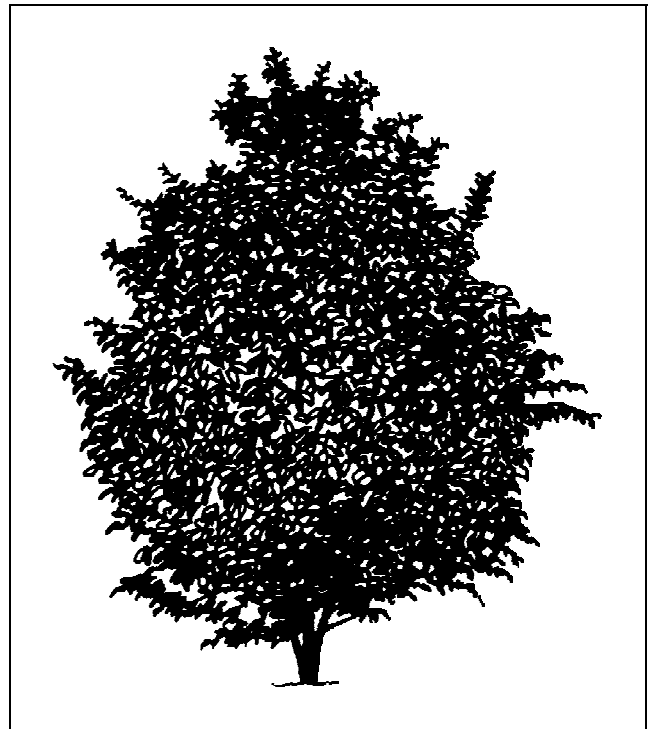


Figure 1. Middle-aged Persian Parrotia.

lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 40 feet

Spread: 20 to 35 feet

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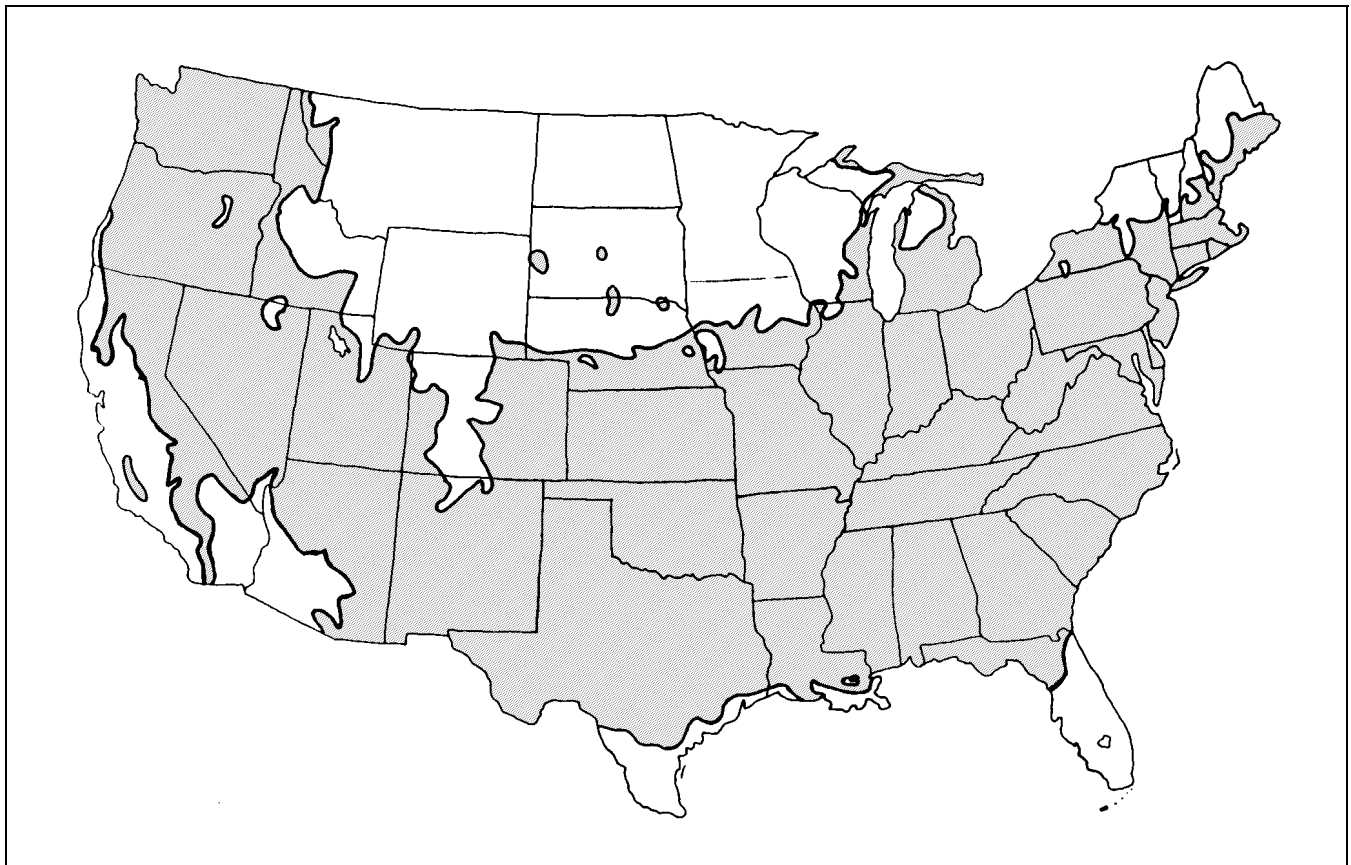


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: crenate; dentate; serrate

Leaf shape: oblong; obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: orange; red; yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

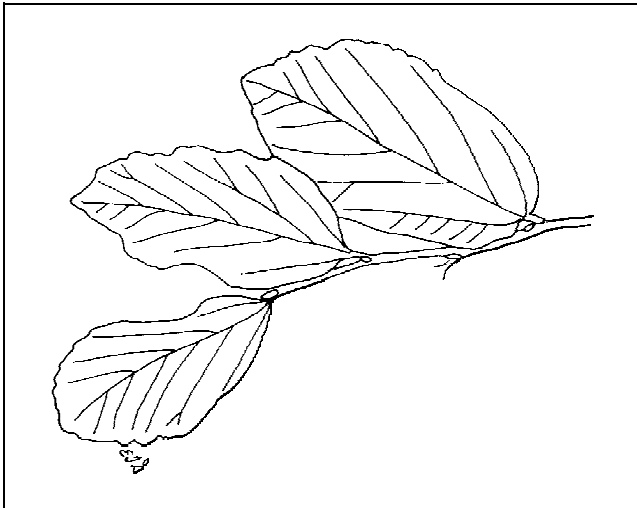


Figure 3. Foliage of Persian Parrotia.

Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline;
acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to
unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter
trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental
features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the
tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

These ornamental characteristics and a pest-free nature make Persian Parrotia ideal for use as a specimen or street tree. Accent the tree in a landscape by setting it off by itself in a lawn or in a bed of low ground cover. Space 20 to 30 feet apart along a street or walk to create a canopy over the walk. It will not canopy over the street but will form a wall of wonderful foliage along the sides of a residential street. This tree should be grown and planted more.

Persian Parrotia should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, slightly acid soil and

will adapt to alkaline soil provided other cultural requirements are met. Trees will not tolerate wet soil conditions, but should show considerable drought tolerance once established.

The cultivar 'Pendula' reportedly forms a rounded, weeping silhouette, five to six feet high by 10 feet wide, but is rare in the trade.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. It is virtually pest free.