

Chinese Chestnut—*Castanea mollissima*



As the American chestnut struggles with disease, the blight-resistant Chinese chestnut is quickly gaining popularity. The sweet-tasting nuts are often roasted for holiday eating and have been made famous in turkey stuffing recipes across the country.

But this is more than a nut tree. The shade of its spreading canopy is dense, providing relief in the hot, dry climates the Chinese chestnut does well in.

Hardiness Zones: The Chinese chestnut can be expected to grow in Hardiness Zones 4-8.

Tree Type: This is a nut-producing tree, yielding nuts for human and wildlife consumption.

Mature Size: The Chinese chestnut grows to a height of 40-60' and a spread of 40-60' at maturity.

Growth Rate: This tree grows at a slow to medium rate, with height increases of anywhere from less than 12" to 24" per year.

Sun Preference: Full sun is the ideal condition for this tree, meaning it should get at least six hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day.

Soil Preference: The Chinese chestnut grows in acidic, loamy, moist, sandy, well-drained, and clay soils. It is drought-tolerant.

Attributes This tree:

- Should be planted in pairs or groups to ensure pollination.
- Yields a ripened nut crop mid/late September through October. A prickly 2-3¹/₂" seed husk encloses 1-4 nuts. The nuts are large, meaty, crisp, and sweet, although less sweet than American chestnuts.
- Begins to bear nuts in 4-5 years if grown from seed.
- Provides dense shade with a handsome, spreading canopy.
- Has wood that is very durable and resistant to rot.
- Features simple, alternate leaves that are 3-5" in length and dark green in color with a toothed margin.
- Does well in hot, dry climates.
- Grows in a rounded shape.
- Is highly resistant to chestnut blight

Wildlife Value: While the chestnuts are valuable for human consumption, they are also valuable as food for wildlife

History/Lore: This tree is native to northern China and Korea. It was introduced in 1853 and 1903.