



Botanical name: *Osmanthus fragrans*

Common name: Sweet Osmanthus, Sweet Olive, Tea Olive, and Fragrant Olive

Family: Oleaceae

Origin: Native to Asia

Height: 2-5m x 2.5m

Habit: Evergreen shrub to small tree

Flower: Small (less than 1 cm long) white, pale yellow or orange-yellow blooms with four-lobed corolla 5mm in diameter. Blooms have a strong ripe apricot or peach fragrance. They flower late summer and autumn.

Fruits: Purple-black drupe 10-15mm long containing a single hard-shelled seed that matures in the spring after flowering.

Leaves: 7-15cm x 2.6-5cm broad mid green, with a variable margin (entire or finely toothed).

Climate: Hardy plants that grow in most climactic regions except the Tropics.

Soil: Well drained humus rich soil. Will benefit from manure and mulching and a dose or gypsum on heavy soils.

Pests/Diseases: Relatively free of pests and diseases though plants grown in shade may get sooty mould. Spray with horticultural oil to both sides of the leaf to control. Caterpillars may munch on the leaves but usually do not cause much damage. Spray with Neem oil to contain if necessary.

NOTES:

1. *Osmanthus* are a group of around 30 different shrubs or small trees. Both *Osmanthus fragrans* and *O. delavayi* grow well in our region.
2. *Osmanthus delavayi* –with two popular varieties ‘Pearly Gates’ and ‘Heaven Scent’ that grow to about 1.5m – 2m high with very similar characteristics and are well suited to pots and garden beds they also make a perfumed alternative to a *Buxus* hedge.
3. There is a variegated form available *Osmanthus fragrans* ‘Yanhua’ has variegated foliage and orange blooms.

Uses: Flowers: may be infused with green or black tea; or jam; dumplings; soups; and liquor; or in Nth India used as insect repellent on clothes.

Potted plants benefit from regular liquid feeding.

Aspect: Full sun to shade

Prune: Prune to shape after flowering if required.

Drought/Frost: Drought and frost tolerant

Propagation: Softwood or semi hardwood cuttings in spring.

In traditional Chinese medicine

Osmanthus tea has been used to treat irregular menstruation. Culturally the blooming is associated with the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival and has cultural and mythological significance.

Source: