



Tree Form

Photos courtesy of Cornell Woody Plants database



Leaves and bark

Common Name:

Japanese Zelkova

Plant Type:

Deciduous Tree

Light

Requirement:

Full Sun

Height/Width:

30'-80' depending on cultivar

Hardiness Zone:

5a-8b

Zelkova serrata

Zelkova serrata is a species of deciduous tree in the elm family (Ulmaceae). It is native to Japan, Korea, Northern China, and Taiwan. It is a medium to large tree that is vase-shaped, with the branches originating from a single point. The bark, which is similar to the bark of a cherry (Prunus) tree, becomes gray and exfoliating when the tree is mature. It has oval-shaped leaves with serrated margins, hence the term "serrata" in the botanical name. The fall color can range from yellow to shades of burgundy depending on the specific cultivar.

Zelkova trees are often promoted as a substitute for American elm trees, as they are resistant to Dutch elm disease and elm leaf beetle. They are also commonly used as street trees because of their resistance to disease and drought. The tree prefers moist soil, though it can tolerate periods of drought once established. In our Ithaca, NY garden, our Zelkova trees provide an excellent shade canopy, and are upwards of forty feet tall.

References:

<https://woodyplants.cals.cornell.edu/plant/288>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/zelkova-serrata/>