

GREEN GONE BAD

Featured Ornamental Plant: *Ulmus parvifolia*; (Chinese Elm)

Some exotic ornamental plants behave badly when they escape from the place they are planted. Infestations of these plants have negative impacts on natural environments. One of these plants is *Ulmus parvifolia*; common name: Chinese Elm



Ulmus parvifolia is native to China, Korea and Japan and was first introduced around 1800. The tree is also commonly referred to as Lacebark Elm. The nursery industry had often confused this tree with Siberian Elm (*U. pumila*), calling both 'Chinese Elm'. This fast growing tree is tolerant of a wide variety of soil types, pH and moisture ranges. It survives in zones 5-9, is resistant to Dutch Elm Disease, and is an incredibly durable tree for tough urban situations.

Ulmus parvifolia is a member of the Elm Family (Ulmaceae). It grows to heights of 50'-60' and equally as wide, capable of trunk diameters exceeding 36". In milder climates, it may be evergreen but typically is a deciduous tree with 1.5"-2.5" long, dark green leaves that are alternately arranged. Wind distributed seeds form in September-October and are in the form of a ½" round light brown samara. One of its common names, Lacebark Elm, comes from its exfoliating bark, which exposes a patchwork of greens, grays, browns, and orange tones: one of the aesthetics that contribute to its popularity as a landscape tree.



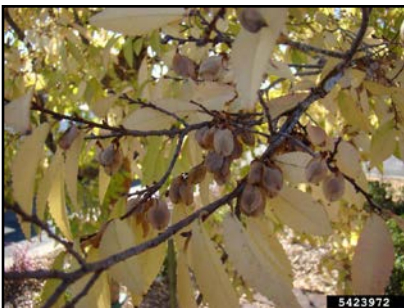
Ulmus parvifolia produces viable seeds, which will germinate in a variety of conditions, especially in moist locations. It can be found readily reseeding itself and is currently being eradicated in the South Carolina Botanical Garden (Clemson), often can be seen reseeding on the USC campus in the midlands, and is avoided in new planting projects at Auburn University. Seedlings are commonly seen through the mid coastal region of South Carolina in nearby parking islands, front yards, road medians, mulch beds, and on the fringes of wooded natural areas near plantings of Chinese Elm.



Ulmus parvifolia has many common cultivars available in the nursery industry, mostly differing on canopy form and size. Some of the more common cultivars are 'Allee', 'Drake', 'Athena', and 'Bosque'.

Horticulturists, landscapers, designers, homeowners, and naturalists have noticed this species spreading. Please be cautious of planting or selling potentially harmful invasive plants. Many native trees provide differing trunk interests,

deciduous foliage and are of similar sizes to the Chinese Elm and can be planted as alternatives. These include: *Betula nigra* (River Birch), *Ulmus alata* (Winged Elm), *Celtis occidentalis* (Hackberry), *Carpinus caroliniana* (American Hornbeam), and *Celtis laevigata* (Sugarberry).



Ulmus parvifolia beginning to infest natural plant community

Visit these web pages for more details:

www.iowadnr.gov/portals/idnr/uploads/forestry/chineseelm.pdf

www.floridata.com/ref/u/ulmu_par.cfm

www.greensbayou.org/greens-bayou-2/ecology/

www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=6567

www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/maryland_dc/explore/mdinvasives-final-card.pdf.

Additional reference: Native Alternatives to Invasive Species by C. Colston Burrell, 2011 (BBG)

See also: <http://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/> and <http://www.se-eppc.org/>

