

**Common Name:** Chinese Pistache

**Scientific Name:** *Pistacia chinensis*. Part of the cashew family, Anacardiaceae.

**This Tree in Colorado:** Native to China but will only reliably work in communities like Grand Junction, Montrose, Delta, Cortez, and the Highway 50 communities from Canyon City to Pueblo to Holly.

**Growth Rate:** 2 -3 feet per year with good maintenance.

**Hardiness Zones:** Zones 6-9; Cold hardy, full sun. Superior drought, heat, wind tolerance once established (in 2-3 growing seasons).

**Soil:** Wide range from acidic to clay to alkaline, but should not be planted in areas with poor drainage and winter-wet soils.

**Shape:** Spreading, umbrella shaped. Considered by some to be an ‘ugly duckling’ as young trees can be gawky, unattractive, and misshapen but with maturity they can grow into a magnificent specimen tree.

**Height:** 25-35 feet. **Spread:** 25-35 feet

**Leaves:** ‘Lustrous’ dark green in summer and orange to red in fall. The Chinese Pistache has a beautiful fall color, second only to certain maples. The leaves are alternate, compound, and evenly pinnate in 10-12, 3 inch long leaflets.

**Bark:** Develops shallow furrows, the ridges becoming scaly, gray to gray-black in color; as the scales flake off they expose a salmon to orange inner bark.

**Wood:** Hard, durable and decay resistant.

**Insects and Disease:** High genetic resistance to insects and diseases.

**Flowers and Fruit:** Has male or female trees. On female trees, green blooms, not showy in April to May. Fruit grows in clusters of pea sized fleshy fruit that are either blue (fertilized) or red (unfertilized). Birds enjoy the fruit, they can be consumed by humans but the seed is considered too small to deal with.

**Best Advice:** Is a tough tree with good fall color and survives urban conditions well. Best in hot, dry areas and can handle receiving only 20 inches of rainfall per year. In some opinions, the male tree has a more handsome form. Some nurseries may carry a male selection called ‘Keith Davey’.

**Sources Used:**

- Arbor Day Foundation website
- Texas A&M University Horticulture website (Texas Superstarts)
- North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension website
- University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture website

