

Zelkova serrata

Japanese zelkova



July 2014

Zelkova serrata 5-6m umbrella in air-pot

Zelkova serrata is a medium sized tree usually growing up to 20m in height. With upright stems it forms a broad spreading habit and rounded crown, the perfect specimen tree.

This native of Japan, Taiwan and east China is a member of the Elm family and because of its high resistance to Dutch elm disease it is often promoted as a substitute.

Relatively fast growing when young it will tolerate nearly all soils, but does best in a moist, well drained location. A tolerance to urban climates also make it a good candidate for street planting.

Insignificant flowers appear in spring as the foliage begins to emerge, these flowers become small wingless drupes which mature in autumn. The oblong-ovate leaves have a serrated margin and are green through spring and summer then turning orange-red in autumn. Another attractive feature is the smooth grey bark which starts to flake in maturity to reveal beautiful orange patches.

Zelkova is valued in Japan for the production of commercial timber. It is also the symbol of many Japanese cities. In Korea, a study showed that the largest percentage of trees over 500 years old were Zelkova, 10 of them registered as natural monuments.

Plant Profile

Name: Zelkova serrata

Common Name: Japanese zelkova

Family: Ulmaceae

Height: up to 20m

Demands:

Foliage: Oblong-ovate serrated leaves. Brilliant autumn colour

Bark: Smooth and grey. With ages will flake to reveal orange bark underneath

Flower: Insignificant green flowers in spring

Fruit: Small wingless drupes in autumn



Japanese Zelkova 30-40cm mature standards

Zelkova serrata

Japanese zelkova

Deepdale

The shape and colour of *Zelkova serrata* make it a popular choice for use as an ornamental bonsai.



Summer foliage of *Zelkova serrata*



Smooth bark flaking to show orange



Autumn foliage of *Zelkova serrata*



Japanese Zelkova 4-5m multistem specimens



Field grown standards in autumn, 40-50cm girth