

## Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)



### Summary:

The Chinese pistache, a deciduous tree native to China, Taiwan, and the Philippines, was first introduced in Chico, California, in 1909. Their introduction is credited to Frank Meyer, one of the most renowned U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hunters at the time (Schoonover 2014). Today, nearly all of the Chinese pistache trees in the United States can trace their roots to the first seeds that arrived in South Chico. The Chinese pistache has gained massive popularity as an ornamental tree, and is now amongst the top ten most planted trees in California cities (Rejmdnek 2014).

Chinese pistache are slow growing trees, and typically reach heights of 35 feet when used in ornamental gardens. In wild settings, the trees can reach heights of over 60 feet (NCSU n.d.). When mature, the canopy can span over 30 feet in diameter, making it a good choice for a shade tree. The leaves of a Chinese pistache are long and feather-like. While a tranquil deep green during summer months, the Chinese pistache shines in the fall, where the leaves turn bright orange and red (UCANR 2023).

### Fire, Pests, and Other Considerations:

The Chinese pistache is a very resilient tree, capable of surviving in a wide variety of soil types (UCANR 2023). They are also tolerant of drought and intense heat. Once they reach maturity, they are also considered resistant to pests and the majority of diseases. Due to their high moisture content and heat tolerance, the Chinese pistache is considered fire-resistant (Arbor Day Foundation 2026). Despite being non-native to California, the Chinese pistache has not yet been classified as invasive due to its slow reproduction and minimal impacts on the environment. Still, many researchers are skeptical of the tree and recommend minimizing the continued ornamental use of the Chinese pistache (Rejmdnek 2014).



## References:

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