Jujube
(Ziziphus jujuba)

The Jujube (also called Chinese jujube or Chinese date) is an attractive tree with edible fruits that can be grown throughout Florida. This uncommon fruit has a unique, sweet flavor that you’re sure to love.

The one-inch-long fruits start out green and turn red or mahogany once they mature. They look somewhat like cherries but taste more like apples. The trees are prized for their ornamental qualities. The gnarled branches grow in an interesting zig-zag pattern and have a somewhat weeping habit. Many have thorns, though thorn-less cultivars are available.

Chinese jujube can be planted in full sun or partial shade. It enjoys hot summers but will also tolerate cold winters. Depending on variety, this deciduous tree can reach anywhere from 15 to 40 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 30 feet. Most unpruned plants grow with several trunks and so it may require some pruning to maintain a single trunk.

The mottled gray/black bark is rough and shaggy. The one to two-inch-long leaves have a paler underside and sharp spines at the base of each leaf. Fall color is often a showy yellow, but not consistent. In spring, small clusters of yellow or white, fragrant blossoms appear, hidden in foliage between the leaf and stems.

The fruits are quite sweet and can be eaten fresh, candied, canned, or dried like dates. Even young, two-year-old trees are able to produce these delectable treats but be forewarned that these fruits can create quite a litter problem. Locate the tree so the fruit drops in a mulch bed or on the lawn, not on a sidewalk, patio or driveway.

Chinese jujube is drought tolerant once established, though fruiting will be heavier if it receives regular water. No pests or diseases are of major concern.

A jujube tree named ‘Sugar Cane’ has recently been planted in the Baker County Extension Office Arboretum. ‘Sugar Cane’ is considered early ripening, with fruit ripening in August through September. Medium size fruit is round to elongated and extremely sweet, and juicy.

Information Source:
http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/trees-and-shrubs/trees/jujube.html

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