Cultivars of Japanese Plants at Brookside Gardens

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Since 1977 Brookside Gardens, a publicly supported botanical garden within the Montgomery County, Maryland, park system, has maintained a special collections program to introduce into cultivation ornamental plants (primarily woody) not in general cultivation in this country. Plants that appear to be well-suited for the area are grown at the county’s Pope Farm Nursery in sufficient quantity for planting in public areas, and others intended for wider cultivation are tested and evaluated in cooperation with nurseries and public gardens throughout the United States. Information on the plants is kept in the county’s computer system, by means of a program designed under the guidance of Carl Hahn, chief of horticulture. The collections are maintained and evaluated under the supervision of the curator, Philip Normandy.

To date more than 1000 different plants have been acquired, mainly from Japan but also from Korea, England, and Holland. The Japanese collection includes both wild and cultivated plants, and the English and Dutch contain mostly hard-to-find species and cultivars from specialty nurseries. Many of the plants were collected by the authors, and some were ordered from commercial nurseries.

Cultivar Names of Japanese Plants

One of the persistent problems with the collections has been the accurate naming of Japanese cultivars. In our efforts to assign cultivar names that are in agreement with both the rules and recommendations of the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, 1980, we encountered several problems. The most obvious was language, as virtually all printed references to these plants are in Japanese. However, a more serious difficulty was trying to determine which Japanese names satisfied the Code and which, regardless of how commonly they are used, had to be set aside. In resolving these difficulties, we arrived at what we believe will serve as ground rules for assigning English names to Japanese plants being introduced into the United States.

First, most Japanese cultivar names can be divided into two broad categories: metaphorical and literally descriptive. The first group is easy to deal with on our terms because the names correspond to Western “fancy” names or cultivar names. They are commonly written in Chinese characters (rather than Japanese phonetic symbols, known as

Torreya nucifera ‘Gold Strike’
and do not incorporate the Japanese colloquial names of the plants. These names are usually allusions to ornamental features of the plants. For example: Akebono ("dawn"), Shishigashira ("lion’s mane"), and Amanogawa ("Milky Way"). Such names are characteristic of plants that have been cultivated and selected for a long time, often centuries, particularly those included in what is known as koten engei, the cultivation of "classical plants." Bearing these metaphorical names are such popular groups as Japanese maples, Japanese flowering cherries, Japanese apricots, Japanese pines, most azaleas, and many others. We believe these names ought to be preserved and used.

In the second group the name usually consists of a descriptive prefix added to the Japanese colloquial name of the plant. Several prefixes appear again and again; the most common include the following:

- (describing plant habit)
  - shidare, pendulous
  - hime, diminutive, dwarf
  - yatsubusa, congested, of slow growth

- (describing leaf characteristics)
  - fuin, variegated [shirofu, white-variegated; kiifu, yellow-variegated]
  - murasaki, purple

- (describing flower and fruit characteristics)
  - issai, flowering or fruiting as a young plant
  - yaezaki, double flowers
  - shikizaki, everblooming
  - akabana and bembana, red, pink, scarlet, or orange flowers; shirobana, white flowers; kibana, yellow flowers
  - shromi, white fruit [akami, red fruit]

Names such as these are often written in Japanese phonetic symbols and usually prefix the name of the species; thus shidare ("weeping") ego-no-ki [the Japanese name for Styrax japonicus] refers to a clone of Styrax japonicus with pendulous branches. We believe that such names are contrary to recommendations within article 31A of the Code (sections g and j), which discourage both the use of names that refer to an attribute likely to become common in a group of related cultivars and the use of names that incorporate the common names of plants. Several of these names are used in Japan for more than one cultivar, causing confusion. For instance, several distinct variegated cultivars of Ginkgo biloba are marketed under the name fuiri icho. Many names of this type are also in Western literature as cultivar names, but we hope that they will be rejected in favor of names that are more precise and comply with the Code.

Occasionally a name surfaces that cannot be slipped easily into either of the categories above. For instance, in several Japanese names for selected variants the fu from fuiri ("variegated") has been attached to other words to form combinations that are more precise than fuiri itself; thus arare ("hail") plus fu becomes ararefu, "hail-spot" variegation, and so on. These names can, we believe, be accepted as cultivar names, albeit occasionally with some reservations. The test must be whether a person familiar with both the language and the plants can say that the use of the name is not likely to cause confusion as other cultivars emerge.

Descriptions

The following is a list of cultivars of Japanese plants with descriptions, which we believe will serve to distinguish each plant from the most similar existing cultivar of the same species. The reader should consult
standard references (such as Jisaburo Ohwi's *Flora of Japan*) for complete descriptions of the species. Leaf measurements have been given only where they differ from those of the species.

Most of the selections described here have variegated foliage, a reflection of the Japanese interest in variegation. Historically, far more selections of variegated plants have been produced in Japan than in any other country. Nearly every plant cultivated by the Japanese has been grown at some time in at least one variegated form, and some species, such as *Ardisia japonica*, are represented by scores of variegated cultivars. A complex system for the classification and enumeration of variegated leaf types has developed simultaneously.

The Japanese interest in variegated plants remains strong today but does not approach what it was in the 18th and 19th centuries, when collecting these plants seems to have been almost a national preoccupation. The three-volume *Somoku Kihin Kagami*, published in 1827, described over 500 variegated selections, which had been chosen by a panel of 90 hobbyists and illustrated by famous artists. This was followed in 1829 by the five-volume *Somoku Kinyoshu*, which pictured over 1000 cultivars in the same format. These plants, as well as those selected for showy flowers were (and still are) grown in pots and admired individually rather than as part of a garden landscape. Most of these plants have been cultivated at Brookside Gardens for three years or more, and most have been observed in cultivation in Japan in several seasons as well.


The leaves of this cultivar are dark green, with a distinct central splash of pale yellow. They are 14 to 18 cm long, 5 to 5.5 cm wide, deeply toothed on the margin, and often somewhat twisted. The leaf stalks are green or yellow and reddish at the base on new shoots. Young stems are clearly striped with green and yellow. This is the best and most stable of the cultivars with central variegation; it has no extraneous spots or flecks of color to mar the effect. ‘Sun Dance’ is illustrated (p. 62) but not named or described in *Fuiri Shokubutsu (Variegated Plants)* by Masato Yokoi and Yoshimichi Hirose (1978). Several specialty nurseries in Japan, including Garden Wako, in Yamamoto, supply this plant, which they call Nakafu Ao-ki, meaning "central variegated Aucuba."

In the Dutch publication *Dendroflora* (no. 15/16, 1979), reference is made to a plant named *Aucuba japonica* ‘Nabaku’, described as having a conspicuously large blotch in the middle of the leaf with small yellow dots here and there. We believe the epithet ‘Nabaku’ is a misspelling of ‘Nakafu,’ a name that has been applied to several cultivars of *Aucuba japonica* with

*Aucuba japonica* 'Sun Dance'
central leaf variegation. ‘Sun Dance’ seems to be distinct from the cultivar described in Dendroflora, however.


This selection is like the species, except that the showy catkins are borne in profusion on small plants. It is an attractive and tough plant that can be grown indoors or on a patio and has almost year-round interest. The cultivar name means “dancing shrimp” in Japanese, an allusion to the shrimplike catkins, which move in the breeze and persist after leaf fall. This selection reportedly comes true from seed. It is described and illustrated in the Nihon Kaki catalogue (spring 1981, p. 21), as *Issai Kana-shide*, meaning “early-blooming Carpinus.” It is produced and sold as a bonsai subject by many nurseries, including Nihon Kaki in Angyo.


This plant is identical to *C. harringtonia* ‘Fastigiata’, except that new growth is yellow in spring, becomes chartreuse by midsummer, and green by winter. A selection of a Korean species cultivated in Japan, it has been confused with *C. harringtonia* ‘Fastigiata Aurea’ (listed by den Ouden and Boom) but can be distinguished by its new growth, which is entirely yellow, in contrast to that of *C. h. ‘Fastigiata Aurea’, which is yellow only on the margins of the needles. The name has been derived from the Japanese name for this plant: *Ogon Chosen Maki* or “gold Korean Podocarpus.” This selection is sold under the Japanese common name by several nurseries, including Shibamichi Kanjiro, in Angyo.


On this plant the leaves are dark green, with an irregular central blotch of deep butter-yellow covering one-third of the leaf area. On new growth the blotch is chartreuse. The form of the plant and flower characters are typical of the species. This vigorous cultivar is at its best in full sun and beautiful in all seasons. It was introduced by the Sakata Nursery Company, Yokohama, about 1977 and is illustrated and described in the company’s spring 1978 catalogue (p. 19). Wayside Gardens, Hodges, SC 29695, also lists and illustrates this cultivar in its 1983 catalogue (p. 3).


The leaves of this selection are pale gray-green, with a regular white margin, 2 to 5 mm wide, which occasionally invades the center of the leaf. Splashes of yellow-green, or small areas of paler gray-green along the edge of areas of darker gray-green, occur infrequently. Axillary tufts of hair are absent on the leaf undersurfaces. The leaf apices are often reddish, as well as the leaf bases on new shoots and young twigs. Flowers and habit are typical of the species. This plant sunburns in late summer in our climate unless grown under high shade or on the north
side of a building. It was introduced about 1977 by the Sakata Nursery Company of Yokohama and described and illustrated in its spring 1978 catalogue (p. 19).


This cultivar has medium yellow-green leaves, some with scattered markings of pure white and gray-green. It is supplied by a number of specialty nurseries, including Garden Wako, in Yamamoto, as *Fuiri Utsugi* ("variegated Deutzia"). In the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company catalogue of April 1979 (p. 24), it is listed as *D. crenata var. variegata*, a name that is not legitimate.


Often irregular in outline, the leaves of this plant are somewhat puckered and variously patterned in green, gray green, and pure white. The margin is usually white, with irregular blotches of white and gray invading the center of the leaf.

This plant is propagated and sold by sev-
eral specialty nurseries, including the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo, under the name *Fuiri Biwa* ("variegated *Eriobotrya*"). 'Yukige' is Japanese for "melting snow."


This variegated cultivar is of recent origin, with leaves 5 cm long and 3 to 3.5 cm wide, medium green, and irregularly splashed and streaked with creamy white. Young leaves have longitudinal streaks and splashes of pure white, with some small areas of yellow green, however, some leaves are entirely white. Young stems are often streaked with white. The plant is shrublike, with a spreading habit. It is grown by the Suzuki Nursery, Akayama, Angyo.


This is a new variegated cultivar with leaves 1.5 to 3 cm long and 1.5 to 2 cm wide, medium green, usually with a narrow margin of pure white and profuse speckles of pure white and light yellow-green. A few shoots are all white. Young stems are green or occasionally striped or banded with pure white. This plant is trailing and prostrate in habit. It has been grown by the Suzuki Nursery, Akayama, Angyo.

*Euonymus sieboldiana* Bl. 'Shimoyo'. New cultivar name, assigned by Barry R. Yinger.

This selection has green leaves, sometimes of irregular shape (though usually ovate), and 7 cm long and 3 cm wide. Occasionally they are elongated to 11 cm long and 1 cm wide. The margins are irregular, with blotches of white or gray white breaking up into small blotches and speckles or gradually darkening to green in the center of the leaf. This plant is vigorous and stable. It is listed in the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company catalogue of April 1979 (p. 28) as *Fuiri Mayumi* ("variegated *Euonymus*").

'Shiyomo' is Japanese for "frosty night."

*Eurya japonica* Thunb. 'Confetti'. New cultivar name assigned by Philip Normandy. Yinger Collection No. 769.

The leaves of this cultivar are 3 to 5 cm long and 1.5 to 2 cm wide. Many are green, while others are white, blotched white, pale yellow, or shell pink and distorted and irregular in outline. Several specialty nurseries, including Garden Wako, Yamamoto, supply this cultivar.


All leaves of this cultivar are somewhat distorted, usually narrow and elongated, 3 to 4 cm long and 0.5 to 1 cm wide. They are dark green with a pale pink or white irregular margin, which sometimes invades the center of the leaf in streaks or wedges. This is a dwarf and slow-growing plant. It is supplied by several nurseries, including the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo.


New leaves of this cultivar emerge green, and about half have a broad irregular margin
of pale yellow, which soon becomes creamy white. The margined leaves are green in the center, with small irregular splashes of white and pale gray-green. Some leaves and shoots are entirely creamy white, and a few leaves are not margined but have irregular sectoral wedges of all of these colors. ‘Bandal’ is distinct from ‘Ilgwang’, in the color of emerging leaves and in the ultimate creamy white color of variegated portions, but is sold in Japan under the same name: Fuiri
Rengyo. It is grown by several nurseries, including the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo. ‘Bandal’ is Korean for “half moon.” Like ‘Ilgwang’, it is most successful in a shaded position. Even greater care in propagation must be taken with this cultivar than with ‘Ilgwang’, as ‘Bandal’ tends to revert, and solid green plants can easily result.


All leaves of this cultivar emerge yellow green in spring, ultimately becoming chartreuse; many bear a central blotch of darker green. Average leaf size is 5 cm long and 2 cm wide. This is a selection of a Korean species cultivated in Japan. It is sold by several nurseries, including Kairyo En in Angyo, as Fuiri Rengyo (“variegated Forsythia”). ‘Ilgwang’ is Korean for “sunlight.” This plant requires light shade to avoid sunburn. Care must be exercised in propagating it in order to avoid confusion between it and ‘Bandal’. Cuttings must be taken only from shoots showing a minimum of central blotching.

Ilex serrata Thunb. ‘Koshobai’. Yinger Collection No. 1931.

This cultivar bears leaves that are small and long-pointed, about 3 cm long and 0.7 cm wide. In new growth they are purple at the tips. The flowers and fruit are tiny, about 2 mm wide, and very abundantly produced on this pistillate plant. The fruit is red and very persistent. The plant is slow-growing and twiggy and congested in habit. It is a popular choice in bonsai but also a fine dwarf garden shrub. It is listed in the fall 1979 catalogue of Nihon Kaki, Angyo (p. 29), with an illustration and description. The Japanese cultivar name means “plum of youth.”


The leaves of this selection are trifoliolate, although sometimes reduced to one or two leaflets, and occasionally somewhat distorted. Leaf margins are pure white, the color sometimes invading the center of the leaf, where it may be accompanied by pale gray blotches. The green twigs often have thin white stripes along the ridges of the stem. The flowers are typical of the species. This is a stable and attractive plant sold by Garden Wako, in Yamamoto, as Fuiri Obai (“variegated Jasminum”).


New growth on this cultivar, which is produced at the tips of branches, is creamy white with green flecks, becoming green in late summer. It is illustrated and described in the spring 1982 catalogue (p. 3) of the Nihon Kaki Nursery. ‘Akebono’ is Japanese for “dawn.”


This selection is similar to ‘Blue Pacific’. It can be distinguished by its distinctly grayed tone and shorter needles, which give the plant a denser and tighter appearance. The leaves of ‘Silver Mist’ average about 1 cm long, while those of ‘Blue Pacific’ average...
Neolitsea sericea 'Kanoko'

1.5 cm. 'Silver Mist' is sold by many Japanese nurseries as Shiro Tosho ("white Juniperus conferta"). It is illustrated and described in the fall 1979 catalogue [p. 18] of the Nihon Kaki Nursery.

Laurus nobilis L. 'Sunspot'. New cultivar name, assigned by Barry R. Yinger. Yinger Collection No. 1890.

Some of the leaves of this plant are entirely yellow, but most are green and generously mottled with pale yellow and small blotches of gray green. Occasionally, shoots are also entirely yellow. The Kiraku En Nursery, in Mito, Ibaraki, supplies this plant.

Neolitsea sericea (Bl.) Koidz. 'Kanoko'. New cultivar name, assigned by Barry R. Yinger. Yinger Collection No. 1892.

The leaves of this selection are green, variegated with specks, blotches, and broad irregular longitudinal stripes and wedges of creamy white, accompanied by small blotches of yellow green. The leaves are sometimes slightly distorted. This is the most attractive and stable of several similar selections. It is propagated and sold by the
Kiraku En Nursery, Mito, Ibaraki. 'Kanoko' is Japanese for "fawn."


Green leaves are characteristic of this plant, although many have a creamy white variegation. A sectoral pattern is most common, with the leaves divided in half longitudinally, one section being green and the other white. Some leaves and shoots are entirely white, while others are entirely green. The variegation is chartreuse on young growth. The plant is sold by several nurseries, including Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo, as Furi Hiiagi-mokuseit ('variegated Osmanthus x fortunei').

Osmanthus heterophyllus (G. Don) P. S. Green 'Akebono'. Yinger Collection No. 830.

New growth, stems, and leaves of this cultivar are entirely light yellow, lighter than in 'Ogon', above. Leaves become green by summer, retaining an indistinct yellow-green margin; second-year leaves are entirely green. Leaves bear 8 to 13 spines of uniform size. This plant is grown and propagated by Garden Wako, Yamamoto. 'Akebono' is Japanese for "dawn."

Osmanthus heterophyllus (G. Don) P. S. Green 'Goshiki'. Yinger Collection No. 699.

The leaves of this cultivar are evenly covered with flecks and small blotches of creamy white, dark green, gray green, and yellow green and have a pink cast when un-folding. Creamy white patterns predominate on young leaves, becoming less prominent as the leaves age. Each leaf bears 7 to 9 spines of uniform size. This plant is illustrated and described in the spring 1980 catalogue (p. 34) of the Nihon Kaki Nursery. 'Goshiki' is Japanese for "five colors."


The leaves of this cultivar are narrow, 4 to 5 cm long and 1 to 2 cm wide. Most are crescent shaped or of irregular outline, with 1 to 10 spines per leaf. Their color is medium-green, with an irregular off-white margin. The plant is sold by Suzuki Nursery, Akayama, Angyo. 'Kembu' means "sword dance" in Japanese.

Osmanthus heterophyllus (G. Don) P. S. Green 'Ogon'. Yinger Collection No. 1450.

New shoots (both stems and leaves) of this selection are uniformly bright yellow, gradually becoming chartreuse by midsummer and green by winter. Second-year leaves are a normal dark green. Each leaf bears 12 to
14 long spines not of uniform length. These are usually alternately upcurved and downcurved, with a strongly downcurved terminal spine reminiscent of *Ilex cornuta*. This clone is illustrated and described in the spring 1979 catalogue of the Sakata Nursery Company (p. 34). ‘Ogon’ means “yellow gold” in Japanese.


The leaves of this very distinctive cultivar are dark green, with 8 to 13 spine-tipped lobes, which are cut to the midrib and clustered so that each leaf resembles a tuft of small bamboo leaves. Leaf stalks are purple beneath. The veins are light green. This is an open plant of upright growth, with internodes varying in length from 3 mm to 6 cm and producing dense clusters of leaves at various points on the branches. It is sold by Suzuki Nursery, Akayama, Angyo. ‘Sasaba’ is Japanese for “bamboo leaf.”


The dark green leaves of this plant have a
dark pink margin, with some marbling and sectoral variegation. These markings often fade to pale pink or white. This is a very stable selection. It is illustrated and described in the spring 1979 catalogue (p. 2) of the Sakata Nursery Company as *Fuiri Kaname-mochi* ("variegated Photinia").


This is a plant with a spreading habit, with lax descending branches bearing ascending branchlets. Leaves are narrow, 6 to 7 cm long and 1 to 1.7 cm wide. Flowers and buds are pure white and abundantly produced in panicles 8 to 11 cm long. New growth is green. This selection was collected as a wild seedling by Barry R. Yinger in January 1977, on a mountain slope below Hana-no-ego, Yakushima, Japan, at an altitude of approximately 5000 feet.

*Stauntonia hexaphylla* Decne. ‘Cartwheel’. New cultivar name, assigned by Carl R. Hahn. Yinger Collection No. 1373.

On this plant the youngest leaves on each shoot have irregular white blotches and prominent green veins running throughout, and a pink cast when unfolding. Some leaves are distorted or have a strongly undulate margin. Most become green with age. This plant is particularly showy in spring, when the new shoots contrast with the green leaves of the previous year. It is sold by Nakamura Nursery, Nagoya.


The flowers and foliage of this selection are typical of the species. However, the branches are lax and pendulous, forming a large mounded shrub about 7 feet tall. The plant can easily be induced to form a small tree by staking a leading branch until the desired height is reached. It is sold by a number of nurseries, including Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo, as *Shidare Ego-no-ki* ("weeping Styrax").


The leaves and flowers of this selection are typical of the species except that the flowers are pale pink, shading to darker pink at the base of the petals. Branches of young plants are lax and nearly pendulous, becoming less so as the plant ages. The plant is extremely floriferous even when young. It was introduced about 1976 by the Shibamichi Kanjiro Company, Angyo, as *Benibana Ego-no-ki* ("pink-flowered Styrax"), and it is illustrated and described in the fall 1979 catalogue (cover and page 1) of the Nihon Kaki Nursery as *Benibana Issai Ego* ("early-flowering pink Styrax").

Most shoots on this cultivar are either bright yellow entirely or have both green and yellow needles scattered on the same shoot; some needles are striped green and yellow. The stems of young variegated shoots are yellow. The plant is not stable in coloration, but usually about half the shoots are variegated. It is grown and sold by Kiraku En Nursery, Mito, Ibaraki, as Fuiri Kaya ("variegated Torreya").

Wisteria floribunda (Willd.) DC. 'Mon Nishiki'. Yinger Collection No. 277.

The emerging leaves of this selection are liberally speckled in creamy white and some yellow green, often having a slightly puckered surface and an undulate margin. Leaves produced later in the season are usually green and typical of the species. The purple flowers also are typical of the species and are produced with the new leaves. The plant is illustrated and described in the spring 1982 catalogue [p. 44] of the Kairyo En Nursery, Angyo. 'Mon Nishiki' is Japanese for "brocade cloth." The plant is sold under the name 'Nishiki' ("brocade"), too.

Zelkova serrata (Thunb.) Mak. 'Green Veil'. New cultivar name, assigned by Carl R. Hahn. Yinger Collection No. 835.

This cultivar is characteristic of the species, except that the branches are at first slightly ascending and then strongly pendulous, forming a gracefully weeping, narrow tree without staking. It is an old selection produced by several nurseries, including Shibamichi Kanjiro, Angyo, as Shidare Kekai ("weeping Zelkova").

Authors' Note:

The authors will try to honor requests for more information about these plants and will be pleased to receive additional information as well. At present, time and money do not permit the depth of research that would answer all questions that might be raised, but we will try to address questions as they arise. It is our intention to deposit specimens and documentation of published cultivars with the United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., as the plants continue to develop. Correspondence should be sent to Carl R. Hahn, Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20907. [Please note that the Arnold Arboretum cannot supply these plants or information regarding them.]

The authors wish to express their sincere thanks to Dr. Frederick G. Meyer and Dr. Theodore Dudley, United States National Arboretum; Mr. Philip Normandy, Brookside Gardens; and Ms. Gennie Potter, Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission, for their kind and invaluable assistance in preparing the manuscript.

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