

# *Ligustrum lucidum* or *L. japonicum*?

There have been an increased of sightings and documentations of *Ligustrum japonicum*, Wax-leaf Ligustrum or Japanese Privet in Harris and surrounding counties. This has been very disconcerting because generally the more common species in Harris and surrounding counties is *L. lucidum* or Glossy privet. Here are a few simple characteristics and hints that will help the simple observer be able to tell the difference between the two. Nesom 2009 states that *L. japonicum* is not nearly as invasive as *L. lucidum*, especially in our Texas woods. Even though leaf size is an easy characteristic between distinguishing between the two, small leaved *L. lucidum* specimens are often misidentified.

Here is a key of the two species from Nesom 2009:

- 2. Leaves mostly (3-)4-8(-9) cm, primary lateral veins 3-5 pairs, apex acute to abruptly acuminate, abaxial midvein covered by epidermis.....*Ligustrum japonicum*
- 2. Leaves (4.5-)6-13(-15) cm, primary lateral veins (5-)6-8 pairs, apex usually long-acuminate, abaxial midvein not covered by epidermis..... *Ligustrum lucidum*

## *Ligustrum lucidum*

**Native** – China, Japan and Korea

**Habitat** – Formerly used as a landscape plant and hedge. Grows very well in the shaded understory and in full sun.

**Growth Habit** – Shrub to multi-trunk tree to 4m

**Defining Characteristics** – Leaves larger than *L. japonicum*. The leaf apex is long acuminate meaning that it stretches out to a longer point. Very common as an invasive species.

## *Ligustrum japonicum*

**Native** – Japan, Korea

**Habitat** – One of the most common hedge plants in Houston. When escaping usually found on forest edge.

**Growth Habit** – Shrub to multi-trunked small tree

**Defining Characteristics** – Leaves smaller than *L. lucidum*. Leaf apex does not have as long of a point to it as does *L. lucidum*. Not very common as an escaped species.



Leaves and flowers



Leaves and flowers

