

A key to *Ligustrum* spp.

	"Large-leaf" Species		"Little-leaf" Species	
	<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>	<i>Ligustrum lucidum</i>	<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	<i>Ligustrum quihoui</i>
Common Name(s)	Japanese privet	Glossy privet, Nepal privet	Chinese privet	Waxleaf ligustrum
Form	Shrub	Shrub or tree	Shrub or rarely tree-like	Shrub
Height	6ft to 12ft (rarely to 18ft.)	20ft to 30ft (rarely to 50ft)	To about 15ft, occasionally to 22ft	To about 6ft
Leaf Persistence	Evergreen	Evergreen	Deciduous or semi-evergreen	Usually deciduous
Leaf shape	Ovate, broad-ovate to ovate-oblong	Oval to ovate or oblong	Ovate , rhombic to elliptic or oblong	Elliptic or narrowly oblong or oblanceolate, narrowly oblong or occasionally linear.
Leaf color	Lustrous dark green to black-green	Glossy green to dark green	Dull, dark green above	Dull green
Leaf tip	Obtusely short acuminate or acute to obtusish	Acuminate or sometimes acute	Broadly obtuse to acute or minutely notched	Obtuse, sometimes slightly notched
Leaf base	Usually rounded	Rounded or broad-cuneate	Cuneate	Cuneate
Leaf length	1-1/2" to 4", often 2-1/2" to 3"	3" to 6"	1/2" to 3"	1/2" to 2"
Leaf width	3/4" to 2"	1" to 2-1/2"		
Leaf surface	Leathery, glabrous, flatter than <i>L. lucidum</i>.	Leathery, duller than <i>L. japonicum</i>, the whole leaf somewhat folded lengthwise.	Scarcely leathery and not lustrous, pubescence on midrib below.	Thin, not leathery nor especially lustrous
Leaf margin	Margin and midrib often reddish	Somewhat revolute, often opaque whitish		
Leaf veins	4 to 5 pairs indistinct, raised below.	6 to 8 pairs, usually distinct above and below, veinlets often sunken below	Midrib pubescent	Midrib slightly pubescent
Leaf petiole	1/4" long	1/2" to 3/4" long, grooved on upper surface.	1/8" to 5/8" long	Absent or up to 1/8" long
Inflorescence type	2" to 6", terminal - Panicles smaller than <i>L. lucidum</i>	5" to 8", terminal or axillary - Panicles larger than <i>L. japonicum</i>	Loose terminal panicles about 4" long.	Long, cylindrical, clustered panicles up to 8" long
Flower characteristics			Corolla tube shorter than the lobes	Corolla tube about as long as the lobes
Flower attachment	Short-stalked	Sessile or sub-sessile.	Pedicellate, pubescent	Sessile or Sub-sessile
Flower time	2 to 3 weeks earlier than <i>L. lucidum</i> .	2 to 3 weeks later than <i>L. japonicum</i> .	About 2 weeks earlier than <i>L. quihoui</i>	About 2 weeks later than <i>L. sinense</i>
Fruit color	Lustrous black	Dull, bluish or purplish-black	Blue-black, dull	Blue-black, glaucous
Fruit size and shape	1/4" oval-rounded	1/3" to 1/2" sub-globose to oblong or slenderly obovoid, sometimes curved.	3/16", subglobose to oblong or narrowly obovoid	1/4", subglobose or slightly flattened
Misc.	Contrary to common belief, <i>L. japonicum</i> does not often escape cultivation. Often confused with <i>L. lucidum</i>, the leaves of this species are typically less pointed and flatter than those of Glossy privet.	Looser in outline with larger leaves, not as lustrous dark green and a more opaque rim along the margin than <i>L. japonicum</i>.	Flowers are clearly borne on pedicels. Leaves are typically more rounded in outline than <i>L. quihoui</i>.	Flowers are sessile or borne on very short pedicels. Leaves are typically more narrow versus length in outline than <i>L. sinense</i>.
References:	http://www.csd1.tamu.edu/~sangita/wholeast.htm.out#OLEACEAE%20LIGUSTRUM http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/documnts/ligu_sp.pdf			