

Rhodotypos scandens (Thunb.) Makino

jetbead

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Synonyms. *R. tetrapetalus* (Sieb.) Makino

Growth habit, occurrence, and use. The only member of the genus *Rhodotypos* introduced to any extent in the United States is jetbead—*R. scandens* (Thunb.) Makino. Native to Japan and central China, jetbead is an upright, spreading, deciduous shrub usually 1 to 2 m tall; it reaches 5.5 m in Japan. It was introduced into cultivation chiefly for ornamental purposes in 1966 (Ohwi 1965; Rehder 1940) and may also be of value for wildlife food and cover.

Flowering and fruiting. The showy, white, perfect flowers are 2.5 to 5 cm across and bloom from April to June (Ohwi 1965; Rehder 1940). Jetbead fruits are shiny, black, dry drupes, obliquely ellipsoid in shape. They ripen in October or November and persist on the plant well into the winter; each contains 1 small stubby ellipsoidal stone (seed) about 6 mm long, dull tan in color, and characteristically sculpted in the manner of leaf venation, with the “midrib” extending around the longest periphery (figure 1) (Rehder 1940; Wyman 1947).

Collection of fruits, and extraction and storage of seeds. The fruits can be collected from the bushes by hand or flailed onto canvas from October to midwinter (Rudolf 1974). Extraction of stones from the fruits may not be necessary. In one sample, the number of cleaned seeds per weight was 11,488/kg (5,210/lb); purity was 89% and soundness 86% (Rudolf 1974). Seeds of this species are orthodox and can be stored air-dry in open containers at 1 to 10 EC for up to 9 months without loss of viability. Storage in sealed containers and in a vacuum at various humidities did not improve results (Flemion 1933).

Pregermination treatments. The seeds exhibit a combined dormancy that can be overcome by stratification in moist peat for 30 days at 25 to 30 EC, followed by 90 days of stratification at 5 EC (Barton 1961; Flemion 1933). Partially after-ripened seeds subjected to high temperature go into secondary dormancy (Flemion 1933).

Germination tests. Germination tests can be made in sand flats at temperatures of 20 EC (night) and 30 EC (day) for 90 days. In 3 tests, 81% (range 72 to 86%) of stratified seeds germinated, whereas only 16% of untreated seeds germinated (Flemion 1933; Rudolf 1974).

Nursery practice. Seeds should be sown in the fall in mulched or board-covered cold frames. A sowing depth of 12 mm (½ in) is suggested. Some germination will take place the second year (Flemion 1933). Slightly green (immature) seeds sown in the fall are reported to germinate in 1 year (Dirr and Heuser 1987). Presumably, stratified seeds could be sown in the spring. In a planting test of slightly green seeds collected in August and sown immediately,

100% germination was seen the next spring (Titus 1940). Stem cuttings of jetbead can be rooted any time that the plants have leaves, but June and July are best. A mist bed or shaded plastic tent is recommended (Dirr and Heuser 1987).

References

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Figure 1—*Rhodotypos scandens*, jetbead: fruit (**A**), stone (**B**), and longitudinal section through a seed (**C**), H 6.