

Other Common Names: Japanese Snowflower.

Family: Hydrangeaceae; sometimes further segregated into the Philadelphaceae or Saxifragaceae.

Cold Hardiness: Slender Deutzia is hardy in USDA zones 5 (4) to 8, but languishes in the warmer portions of zone 8 and fairs poorly in southern portions of our region.

Foliage: Opposite simple deciduous 1" to 3" long by about a 1/2" wide narrowly ovate to broadly lanceolate leaves are bright green on new growth, darkening as they mature; margins are irregularly shallowly serrate with rounded to broadly acute bases and long acuminate tips; blades are sparsely hairy above, to nearly hairless; petioles are 1/4" to 1/2" long; no significant fall color develops in our region.

Flower: Small erect loose mildly fragrant spring racemes or panicles up to 3" long consist of bright white 1/2" to 3/4" diameter bell-shaped individual flowers containing five separate spreading ovate petals; the outer most veins on the petals arch around the periphery; individual flowers are held on slender green to red blushed peduncles that are one to three times the length of the flowers; yellow stamens can be found inside the flower; the overall effect is refined and delicate.

Fruit: The small dehiscent brown capsules are not ornamental.

Stem / Bark: Stems — slender twigs are initially erect, arching as they elongate; leaf scars are narrow and horizontal; Buds — the tiny glabrous green nearly sessile buds are an elongated ovoid shape and mature to a brown color with several rather loose scales; Bark — exfoliating gray-brown bark develops on older stems.

Habit: The species type ranges from 2' to 5' (6') tall at maturity with a similar spread of erect to arching fine twiggy stems, but is often represented in our regional trade by the dwarf cultivar 'Nikko' which is more of a 1' to 2' tall plant; the dense rounded mounds of arching stems are fine to medium-fine textured with moderate growth rates.

Cultural Requirements: Generally a full sun to partial shade shrub in other regions, *D. gracilis* benefits from some afternoon shield from the hot Texas sun; most any good well drained humusy garden soil will work and plants are fairly soil pH adaptable; annual renewal pruning may be required to keep plants free of dead twigs, it is probably best to treat this species as a subshrub; irrigation requirements are moderate once established.

Pathological Problems: Few pathological problems are found on this species in the landscape, but aphids, leaf minors and leaf spot diseases have been reported.

Ornamental Assets: A delicate textured shrub, Slender Deutzia offers bright green spring foliage contrasting well with snow white flowers; as the season progresses it offers dark green foliage, but little else.

Limitations & Liabilities: *Deutzia gracilis* tends to languish in the heat of central and southern Texas; plants require at least annual or biennial pruning to remove dead twigs.

Landscape Utilization: Smaller cultivars can be used for low massing or edging, while the taller forms can be incorporated into foundation plantings, shrub borders, possibly fragrance gardens, or transitional landscapes to woodland areas; containers are also a possibility in the right setting; in times past, twigs of *D. gracilis* were forced for use as a cut flower crop.

Other Comments: This can be an attractive small to medium shrub for northern portions of our region, but should be planted to highlight the spring assets and minimize the fall and winter appearance; plants can be fantastic for two weeks in spring, presentable through the growing season, but may look rather like a mass of dead twigs in winter; the genus name honors the Dutchman Johan van der Deutz and the specific epithet means slender.

Native Habitat: Slender Deutzia is native to Japan and Taiwan.

Related Taxa: The genus *Deutzia* C.P. Thunberg (*Neodeutzia*) contains about 50 to 60 species of small to large shrubs of which several are encountered in the U.S. nursery trade; 'Nikko' is a handsome dwarf cultivar which has performed well in the Dallas/Fort Worth area; it is an National Arboretum release that is smaller, more spreading, and more diminutive than the species, fine of texture and produces bright white flowers on spring green foliage and is grown in the Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex; variegated forms tend to languish in our region.

Deutzia* × *lemoinei V. Lemoine ex P.E. Boissier

Lemoine Deutzia

- This species is of garden hybrid origin between *D. gracilis* × *Deutzia parviflora* A.A. von Bunge (*Deutzia amurensis*,

Mongolian Pride-Of-Rochester), both of Asian origin, is sometimes known as Apple Blossom; the specific epithet honors the French nurserymen Victor Lemoine and Emile Lemoine.

- Lemoine Deutzia is sometimes found in our regional trade, but offers little improvement over *D. gracilis*; plants are somewhat larger, 4' to 6' (7') tall, more open in habit and erectly branched than *D. gracilis*, and bloom a bit later in the spring; improved reddish or bronze fall color is reported in some regions relative to *D. gracilis*, but this is seldom expressed in most of our region; Lemoine Deutzia is hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8, but like *D. gracilis* languishes in warmer portions of zone 8.

Deutzia scabra C.P. Thunberg

Fuzzy Deutzia

(*Deutzia sieboldiana*)

- Probably should be called Scratchy Deutzia due to the scabrous leaves which are rough on the upper surfaces, hence the specific epithet which means scratchy; the 1" to 4" long ovate leaves are broader than those of *D. gracilis* or *D. × lemoinei*, have more uniformly crenately serrate margins, broader bases, and less drawn out acuminate tips; new twigs are stellate pubescent and older twigs become hollow.
- Fuzzy Deutzia is a larger, 6' to 8' (10') tall by 4' to 6' (8') wide, more rangy deciduous shrub than *D. gracilis* and to some extent *D. × lemoinei*; older stems develop exfoliating brown bark; branches are often uneven in length lending plants a generally scruffy demeanor; this was the old-fashioned *Deutzia* of mid to late 20th century gardens and has fallen from favor in modern landscapes; this native of Japan and China was valued in the past for its erect 3" to 6" long panicles of white to white flushed pink flowers in mid to late spring, but lacks sufficient interest the other fifty weeks of the year to merit extensive use.

References: Bridwell, 1994; Dirr, 2009; Taylor, 1965; Welch and Grant, 2011; Wyman, 1969.