

Scientific name: *Heptacodium miconioides*

Family: Caprifoliaceae

Common name: Seven-Son Flower of Zhejiang

Native Habitat: China

Hardiness zone: Zones 5-8

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade.

Form: Deciduous, multi-stemmed, arching shrub or small tree.

Soil Requirements: Whilst *Heptacodium miconioides* tolerates a wide range of soils and will adapt to semi-shade, ideal growth occurs in fertile, moist soil, and in full sun.

Growth Rate: Medium

Height: 15 to 20 feet high and slightly less in spread.

Leaf: Leaves are opposite, ovate-oblong, and curved, with 3 strong veins from the base, 3 to 4 inches long, 1-½ to 2 inches wide, and a dark green, glossy colour.

Flower: Flowers begin to appear in late August and last until the final days of September. Flowers are fragrant, creamy white, and borne in terminal clusters of seven, hence the genus name, *hepta* (seven) and *codium* (head), and the fitting common name of Seven-Son Flower of Zhejiang.

Heptacodium miconioides' second show begins in October and November when the flowers fade away to display small fruits which are crowned with five green calyces which elongate after bloom and turn a rich rose-red colour. These large coloured calyces are as showy as the blooms. The overall effect is quite spectacular and long lasting.

Bark: The outer bark of *H. miconioides* peels away in thin, narrow strips revealing beige undertones.

Heptacodium miconioides was discovered by Western horticulturists in China in 1907, but it was not cultivated commercially. However in 1980 a Sino-American Botanical Expedition recollected specimens and the plant was introduced into cultivation by the Arnold Arboretum.

H. miconioides is gaining in popularity, and quite rightly so, by offering three seasons of interest with its fragrant flowers, showy calyces, and exfoliating bark. "Seven-Son Flower of Zhejiang" is easy to grow, tough, and certainly worthy of a place in your garden.

