

Friday, March 1, 2024

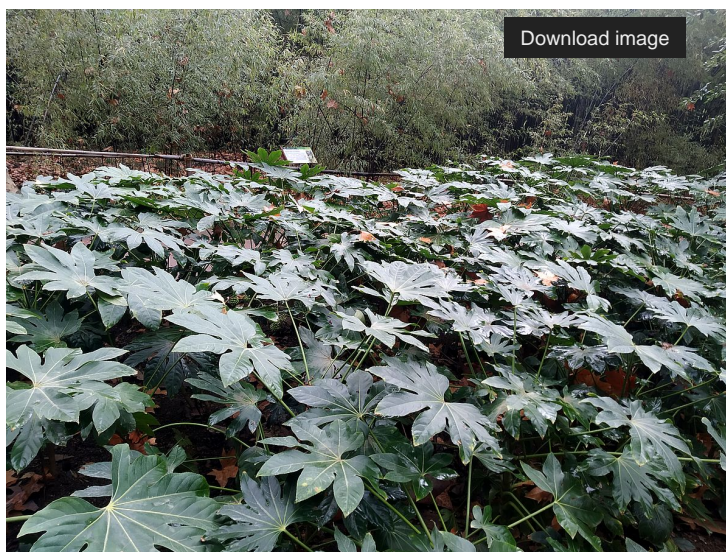
Fatsia japonica

Scientific name: *Fatsia japonica* (Thunb.) Decne. & Planch.

Family: *Araliaceae*

Common name: False Castor Oil Plant,
Glossy-Leaved Paper Plant

This December we are going to pay attention to a very showy perennial shrub that can reach several metres in height. It stands out for its large and beautiful leaves, up to 40 cm wide and with a long petiole; with a leathery texture, almost circular, palmate, divided into several lobes, between 7 and 10. They are dark green and shiny on the upper side and a little lighter on the underside. When gathered in a mass, it is an impressive plant.



The flowers of this aralia are insignificant, small and whitish, gathered in umbel-like inflorescences. More decorative are its fruits, globular, shiny black berries. When young, the plant is covered with a woolly tomentum which it loses at maturity.

Fatsia is a temperate climate plant, which grows naturally in the shade of humid forests in Japan. The species name is an obvious reference to its geographical origin. As a curiosity, the name of the genus comes from the Japanese word *fatsi*, which can be translated as 'eight fingers', referring to the lobes of the leaves. However, the number of lobes is usually odd, normally 9; but in Japanese 8 means 'many'.

It flowers from October or November onwards, and from December and January we can see its fruits. Its use is ornamental, both outdoors and in pots indoors. The whole plant is toxic and irritating. In La Concepción, a large group can be seen in front of the gardener's house.