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BIO 140 Arboretum Project

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Cercidiphyllum japonicum (Katsura) ID

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April 24, 2020

Bio 140L: Humans and Their Environment

Salve Regina University



Name: Katsura

Native: Japan

Family Name: Cercidiphyllaceae

Botanical name: *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

For this course, all the students are assigned to observe a tree on campus of our choice. I chose katsura tree, which is located in front of the library right next to the path that we take to walk back and forth from O'hare building to the McKillip library. I chose this tree because when I first come to Salve in August 2017, this tree wasn't there. It was planted after I come to Salve and I have witnessed this tree to grow up year after year almost for three years now. I named it Dekyi a Tibetan name འདེ་རྗེ་ལྷོ་། which means (Happiness). Over the course of three years I have been observing this tree all four seasons. I was amazed to see all the changes it goes through. I have seen it soaked in the rain, covered with the snow, bloomed with colors, and as well as its lifeless look. When it blooms in spring, its leaves emerge heart-shaped with reddish-purple, changing to blue-green as they develop. In autumn the color display changes again as clear yellow or apricot color.



Figure 1: A photo of my tree in February 2020.

As much as I am foreign to this tree, this tree is foreign to me. I know very little about it. After looking at the site called, The Morton Arboretum, I learned that this tree is a Non-native tree from Japan. The Katsura is a deep-rooted tree which is sensitive to drought. It needs to be

water in the dry circumstances. It is mostly found on the park way or street. It grows moderate to fast growing. If planted in the spring, it will be beneficial for the development of its root.

Katsura's blooming season is early fall to mid fall and Its leaves are Oval, Pyramidal, Round in shape. Its mature height ranges between 40-60feet, width will be 20-30 feet. My tree is a small tree with the height of 4.27feet. This tree can be planted in the moist, well-drained soil with direct exposure to sun light. It has a great sense of tolerance which includes wet sites, Alkaline and clay Oval.



Figure 2: My tree in March 2020:

Over the months, I have been visiting my tree at least once a week. When I first took the picture in February, I saw a dry tree but only few of its branches started transforming its colors. As the days and weeks goes by, I started observing more changes. Its buds are coming out on their branch and the branch itself is changing its color into reddish brown. Not long after I see buds grown on every single branch it has. I enjoyed learning about this Katsura tree. It was very interesting to observe a tree so closely and see the extreme changes it endures within a very short

period of time. Unfortunately, I was not able to see the whole changes the tree undergoes this semester, however with my previous years' observation experience, it's always been astonishing to see that once the bud started spreading up the whole process speeds up and it seems like you see a whole green tree almost in one night period. Sometimes, when I walk toward that tree I would pause and think, it was green yesterday and its yellow today.

During my research I learned that Katsura has other varieties and the one I find most interesting is Red Fox Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Rotfuchs'). It is named after animal and it has its uniqueness. It is one of the most colorful Katsura tree with smaller in size. It blooms purple-bronze color in the spring and changes its color to green-bronze in the summer and transforms into orange-bronze colored leaves in the fall. This arboretum project not only helped me to gain knowledge about this specific species of tree and the role it plays on earth, but also made me to appreciate the beauty of nature more.

There is also a Japanese poem about the Kasura tree by Kokin Rokujo. Which translated:

The moon shines
Upon the river at Katsura,
So pure that
Upstream and down in autumn,
Scarlet leaves I see.

At the same swift waters:
Sweetfish sprats head up
The Ōi River,
Waiting, unmoving are
The lighted fishing-fires.

Upon Katsura River,
Waiting, unmoving are
The cormorant boats;
Is it only at these swift waters, that
The sweetfish sprats do race?

Reference

Arboretum, The Morton. n.d. *The Morton Arboretum* . <https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-plant-descriptions/katsura-tree>.

Beaulien, David. 2020. *The Spruce*. January 3. <https://www.thespruce.com/katsura-tree-care-and-growing-guide-4588925>.

Rokujo, Kokin. 2017. *Waka Poetry* . January 20. <http://www.wakapoetry.net/tag/katsura/>.