



Ghent University Botanical Garden

*Clethra* L. (Clethraceae)

VEGETATIVE KEY TO SPECIES IN CULTIVATION

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## Vegetative identification key.

### Introduction:

This key is based on vegetative characteristics, and therefore also of use when flowers and fruits are absent.

- Use a 10x hand lens to check pubescence in general.
- Look at the entire plant.
- Beware of hybridisation, especially with plants raised from seed other than wild origin.

### Abbreviations used in this key:

- **L/W** = length/width
- **LS** = lower surface
- **US** = upper surface

### Taxa treated in this key: → p3.

### References:

- JDL herbarium and [illustrations](#)
- living specimens, in various arboreta, botanic gardens and collections
- literature:

Bean, W.J. & Clarke, D.L. - (1980) - *Clethra* in Bean's Trees and Shrubs hardy in the British Isles 1, p.668-673. - and [Trees and Shrubs Online](#)  
Qin, H. & Fritsch, P. - (2005) - *Clethra* in Flora of China 14, p.238-241. - and [online edition](#)  
Krüssmann, G. - (1977) - *Clethra* in Handbuch der Laubgehölze 1, p.383-385.

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**[Plantentuin Universiteit Gent](#)**

**[Arboretum Wespelaar](#)**

01 a	Plant (semi-)evergreen, lamina rather coriaceous. ....	02
b	Plant deciduous, lamina rather chartaceous. ....	08
02 a	Petiole 6-10(-12) mm. ....	<b>C. pringlei</b>
b	Petiole predominantly 10-30 mm. ....	03
03 a	Lamina LS pale grayish green to yellowish green. ....	04
b	Lamina LS green. ....	05
04 a	Lamina US glabrous - midvein excepted (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. luzmariae</b>
b	Lamina US pubescent (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. mexicana</b>
05 a	Lamina LS with ≤10 secondary veins/side. ....	<b>C. species 'Vietnam'</b>
b	Lamina LS with 14-18 (-more) veins/side. ....	06
06 a	Lamina LS midvein and petiole glabrous to pubescent with minute appressed hairs (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. konzattiana</b>
b	Lamina LS midvein conspicuously pubescent with long spreading hairs (10× LENS). ..	07
07 a	Petiole green. Lamina US midvein green and subglabrous (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. arborea</b>
b	Petiole pinkish red. Lamina US midvein pinkish red and densely pubescent at least in basal half (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. poilanei</b>
08 a	Lamina LS predominantly with 6-12 secondary veins/side. ....	09
b	Lamina LS predominantly with (12-)14-18 secondary veins/side. ....	12
09 a	Lamina apex acute to acuminate. ....	10
b	Lamina apex acute. ....	11
10 a	Lamina LS secondary veins and tertiary transverse veinlets strongly raised. ....	<b>C. acuminata</b>
b	Lamina LS secondary veins not or slightly raised. ....	<b>C. cavaleriei</b>
11 a	Shoot initially pubescent with minute short hairs (10× LENS). Petiole 10-20 (-more) mm. ....	<b>C. alnifolia</b>
b	Shoot initially pubescent with long hairs (10× LENS). Petiole 6-12 mm. ....	<b>C. tomentosa</b>
12 a	Lamina halfway with midvein/secondary vein angle predominantly >45°. ....	13
b	Lamina halfway with midvein/secondary vein angle predominantly ≤45°. ....	14
13 a	Lamina LS pubescent throughout (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. delavayi</b>
b	Lamina LS pubescent on midvein, secondary veins + axils (10× LENS). ..	<b>C. monostachya</b>
14 a	Lamina margin finely serrate with appressed teeth (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. poilanei</b>
b	Lamina margin coarsely serrate with spreading teeth (10× LENS). ....	15
15 a	Lamina L/W ratio +/- 2/1, US soon glabrous (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. barbinervis</b>
b	Lamina L/W ratio clearly >2/1, US pubescent with long hairs (10× LENS). ....	<b>C. fargesii</b>

Taxa treated in this identification key.

*C. acuminata*  
*C. alnifolia*  
*C. arborea*  
*C. barbinervis*  
*C. cavaleriei*  
*C. conzattiana*  
*C. delavayi*

*C. fargesii*  
*C. luzmariae*  
*C. mexicana*  
*C. monostachya*  
*C. poilanei*  
*C. pringlei*  
*C. tomentosa*

