

Illicium parviflorum Anise¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

This rapidly growing, large, evergreen, Florida native shrub has medium- to coarse-textured, olive green, leathery leaves and small, greenish-yellow flowers (Fig. 1). The many, slender, drooping branches of anise give a rounded, open canopy in the shade that is ideal for natural settings, or it can be pruned into dense hedges, screens, or windbreaks in sunny locations. Branches often root when they touch the ground and root sprouts appear several years after planting. This adds to the density of the shrub. The slightly fragrant spring flowers are followed by brown, star-shaped, many-seeded pods that cling to the stems. The leaves of anise give off a distinctive fragrance of licorice when bruised or crushed.



Figure 1. Anise

General Information

Scientific name: *Illicium parviflorum*

Pronunciation: ill-LISS-see-um par-vif-FLOR-um

Common name(s): anise

Family: *Illiciaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 10A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: hedge; espalier; screen; foundation; border

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

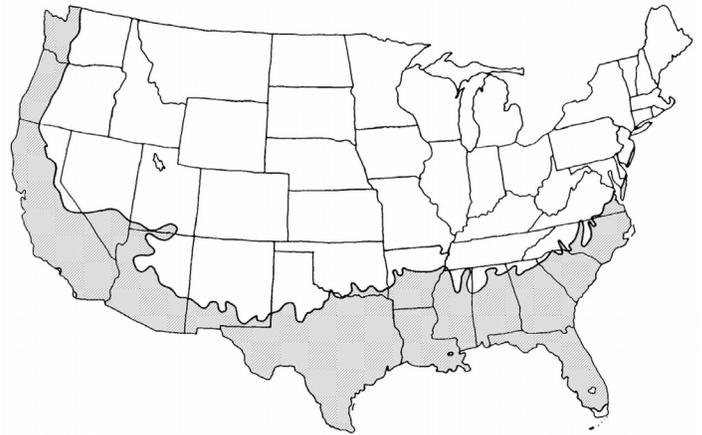


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range

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Description

Height: 15 to 20 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Plant habit: oval
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: undulate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: fragrant
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; not particularly showy
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Anise grows well in sun or shade but thins out in the shade. Anise appreciates rich soil and ample moisture but will easily survive harsher conditions. Anise is an easy-to-grow, pest-free shrub. Once established it will need watering only during long periods of drought and pruning once a year to maintain its shrub form. Plant on five- to seven-foot centers to establish an unpruned screen, closer for a tall clipped hedge. Allow plenty of room for this shrub. It grows too large for a residential foundation planting but can be pruned into a small, multi-stemmed tree.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.