

Noronhia emarginata: Madagascar Olive¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

Introduction

A very tough tree well-suited for coastal and seaside locations, Madagascar Olive is an attractive, upright oval, evergreen with six-inch-long, leathery, olive green leaves and a high tolerance for salt and wind. The crown appears to stay well-formed even right up on the coast where it is exposed to salt spray. It reaches a height of 20 feet with a 15 to 20-foot-spread. The inconspicuous but fragrant, small yellow blooms are followed by one-inch-diameter, bright

yellow fruits, turning to dark purple, with a sweet, edible, cream-colored flesh, which add to the tree's ornamental value. The dropping fruit may be undesirable to some people when planted near walks or pavement, but properly located in a bed or lawn is of little concern.

General Information

Scientific name: *Noronhia emarginata*

Pronunciation: nor-RAWN-ee-uh ee-mar-jih-NAY-tuh

Common name(s): Madagascar Olive

Family: *Oleaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: has been evaluated using the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (Fox et al. 2005). This species is not

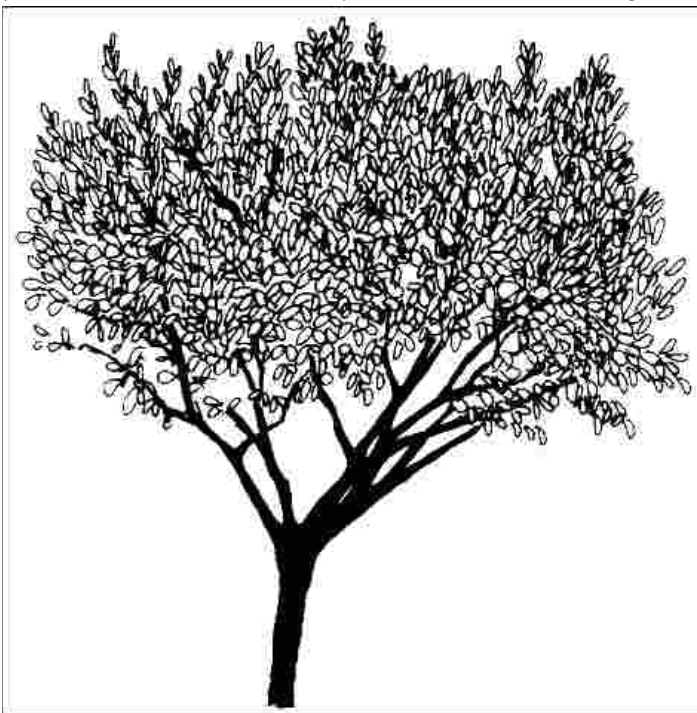


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Noronhia emarginata*: Madagascar Olive

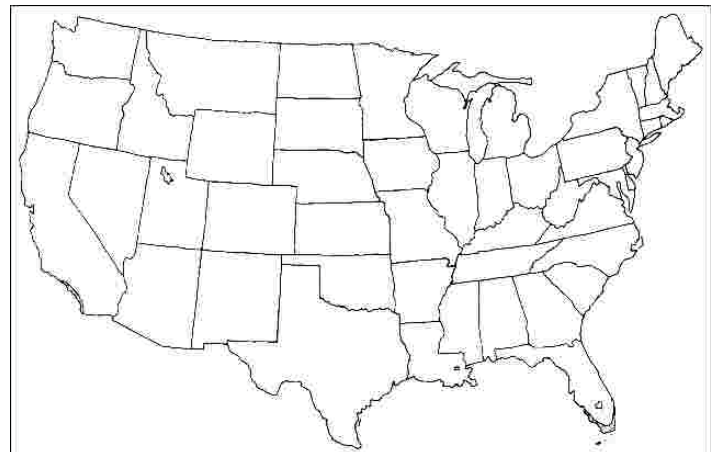


Figure 2. Range

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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documented in any undisturbed natural areas in Florida. Thus, it is not considered a problem species and may be used in Florida.

Uses: reclamation; street without sidewalk; deck or patio; screen; specimen; espalier; fruit; container or planter; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; urban tolerant; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 20 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: oval, vase

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: obovate, elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate, brachidodrome

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, broadleaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: purple, yellow, green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; can be trained to one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green, brown

Current year twig thickness: thick

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

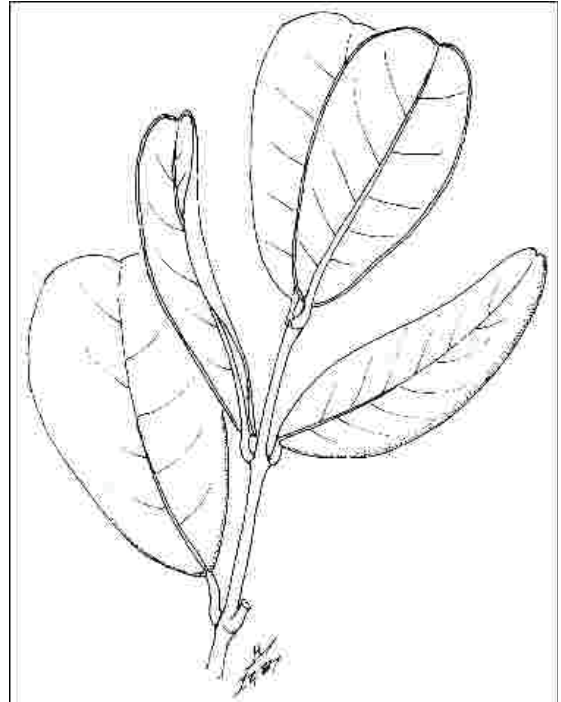


Figure 3. Foliage

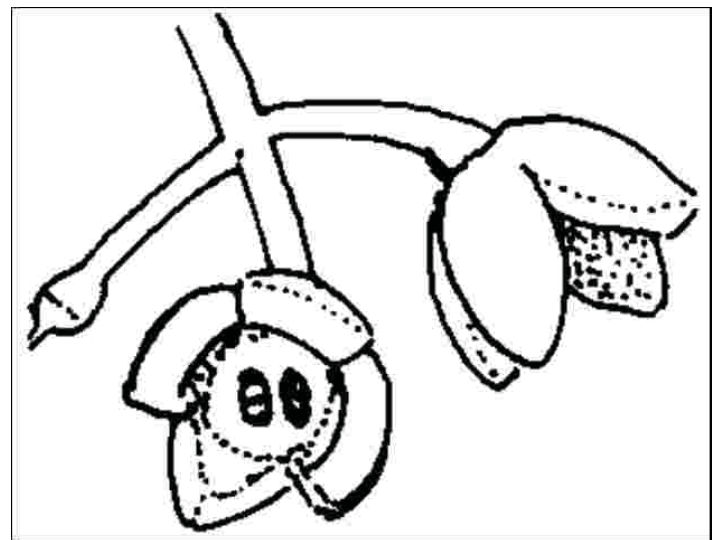


Figure 4. Flower

Use and Management

Growing easily in full sun or partial shade, Madagascar Olive is quite adaptable to a wide range of soils. It works well as a dense screen or windbreak, and can form an ideal specimen or framing tree for landscapes with limited room after the lower branches are removed. A cluster of trees creates a handsome, informal grouping. This is a tough small tree which is suitable for many locations. Use it to create shade on a patio or grow it in a large, heavy container on a deck. The small size makes it ideal for planting along streets where there are overhead power lines.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker (2005) IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. Cited from the Internet (November 3, 2006), <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment.html>.