

## ***Noronhia emarginata*: Madagascar Olive<sup>1</sup>**

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Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

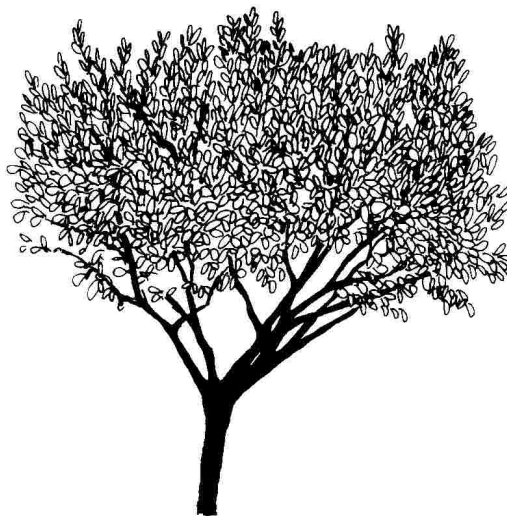
A very tough tree well-suited for coastal and seaside locations, Madagascar Olive is an attractive, upright oval, evergreen with six-inch-long, leathery, olive green leaves and a high tolerance for salt and wind. The crown appears to stay well-formed even right up on the coast where it is exposed to 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



**Figure 1.** Middle-aged *Noronhia emarginata*: 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 documented in any undisturbed natural

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1. This document is ENH-578, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised March 2007. Reviewed October 2003. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.  
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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

**Crown shape:** oval, vase

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple



Figure 2. Range

**Description**

**Height:** 20 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular

**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

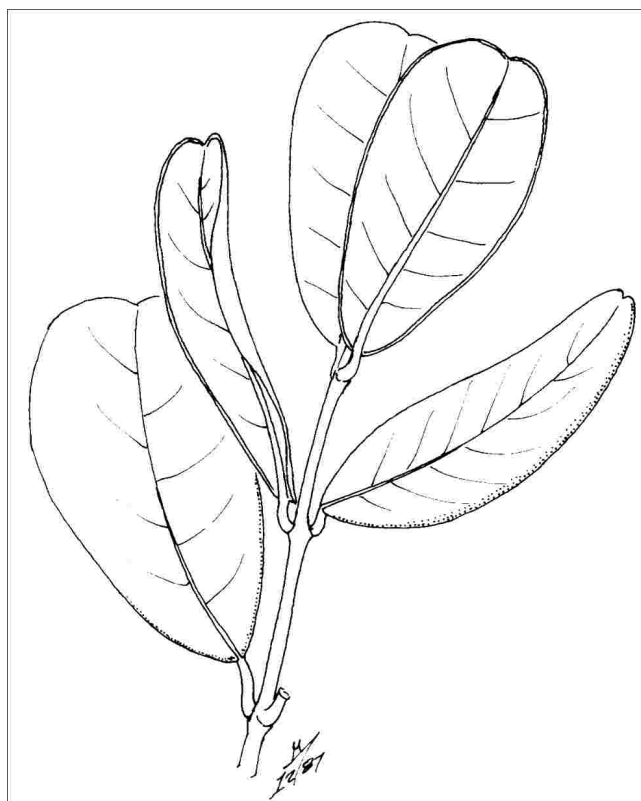
**Winter interest:** no

**Outstanding tree:** no

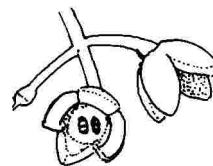
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown

**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>