

***Osmanthus americanus*: Devilwood¹**

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Introduction

A native to the southeastern United States, Devilwood is a very attractive, small evergreen tree which is most commonly seen at 15 to 25 feet in height and sports lush, dark, olive green leaves throughout the year. It is occasionally seen 30 to 40 feet tall in its native habitat and grows slowly. The clusters of small, white, fragrant, early springtime flowers are followed by the production of small, dark blue drupes, ripening in fall and persisting on the tree until the following spring, if not first consumed by birds and other wildlife. Its ease of growth, pest-resistance, attractive foliage and flowers, and wildlife-attracting fruits would make Devilwood a popular choice for naturalizing or the mixed shrubbery border. The trees tolerate heavy pruning particularly well and may also be used as a hedge. Devilwood is so-named because the fine-textured wood is difficult to split and hard to work.

General Information

Scientific name: *Osmanthus americanus*

Pronunciation: oz-MANTH-us uh-mair-ih-KAY-nus



Figure 1. Young *Osmanthus americanus*: Devilwood

Common name(s): Devilwood, Wild-Olive

Family: *Oleaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

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Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: hedge; screen; reclamation; deck or patio; highway median; street without sidewalk; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; specimen

Availability: not native to North America

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate, ovate, elliptic (oval)



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: vase, round

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: blue

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

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; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

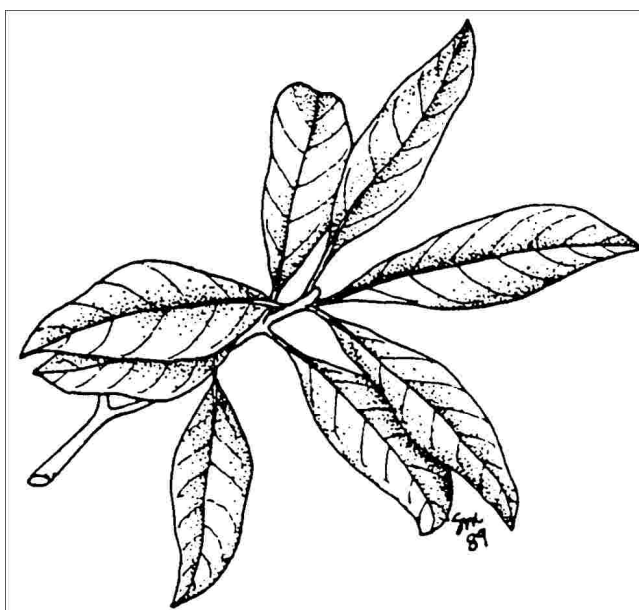


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

Naturally found along streambanks or swamp margins, Devilwood should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained soil. Drought tolerance is moderate once established. The tree is probably as shade tolerant as any osmanthus. Not tested as an urban tree but may have some merit in wet soils.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed, and is difficult by either.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.