**Introduction**

This selection of banana shrub is a dense, upright, evergreen shrub when young that eventually forms a rounded canopy (Fig. 1). Leaf size is about halfway between the two parents. It attains a height of 10 to 15 feet in sunny locations. It has lustrous, dark green foliage with thick brown hairs on the underside. Brown hairs cover the green twigs so densely that the twigs appear brown. The fragrant, 1 1/2-inch-diameter, light yellow flowers are edged in maroon and are magnolia-like in appearance. They last from spring until early summer and have a very interesting fragrance; they smell like ripening cantaloupes or bananas. This smell can be very pleasant but can be overwhelming when these shrubs are massed together. The bark of the banana shrub becomes a dark grayish-brown color with age.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Michelia doltsopa x figo ‘Allspice’*
- **Pronunciation:** my-KEEL-lee-uh-dolt-SOE-puh FYE-go
- **Common name(s):** ‘Allspice’ banana shrub
- **Family:** Magnoliaceae
- **Plant type:** shrub
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 10 (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 9:** year round
- **Planting month for zone 10:** year round
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** near a deck or patio; specimen; espalier; screen; border
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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**Description**

Height: 10 to 20 feet  
Spread: 6 to 15 feet  
Plant habit: upright  
Plant density: dense  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: entire  
Leaf shape: oblong  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**

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

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: oval  
Fruit length: less than .5 inch  
Fruit cover: dry or hard  
Fruit color: red  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

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

**Culture**

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

**Other**

Roots: usually not a problem  
Winter interest: no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

**Use and Management**

Banana shrub is generally used as a specimen and foundation plant and is well suited for planting in a large container or raised planter. Older plants can be trained into small, multi-trunked trees. It is quite urban tolerant.

Banana shrub prefers a well-drained, acid, organic soil that is of medium fertility and moisture. It grows well in full sun to a mostly shaded location. Shaded plants grow taller than sun-grown plants and develop a central leader with little pruning; whereas sun-grown plants often develop several trunks with a rounded canopy.

Propagate this plant by cuttings because the seeds are nonviable.

**Pests and Diseases**

Banana shrub is relatively free of any pests or diseases. However, scales and mushroom rot may become a problem. A scale infestation can cause some defoliation.