Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf Acacia

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Introduction
Quickly reaching a height of 40 feet and a spread of 25 feet, Earleaf Acacia becomes a loose, rounded, evergreen, open shade tree. It is often planted for its abundance of small, beautiful, bright yellow flowers and fast growth. The flattened, curved branchlets, which look like leaves, are joined by twisted, brown, ear-shaped seed pods. Growing 6 to 8 feet per year, Earleaf Acacia quickly grows into a medium-sized shade tree. This makes it a popular tree. However, it has brittle wood and weak branch crotches, and the tree can be badly damaged during wind storms. Prune branches so there is a wide angle of attachment to help them from splitting from the tree. Also be sure to keep the major branches pruned back so they stay less than half the diameter of the trunk. These techniques might increase the longevity of existing trees.

General Information
Scientific name: Acacia auriculiformis
Pronunciation: uh-KAY-shuh ah-rihk-yoo-lij-FOR-miss
Common name(s): Earleaf Acacia
Family: Leguminosae
USDA hardiness zones: 10A through 11 (Figure 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (IFAS Invasive Plant Working Group 2008), Acacia auriculiformis should be treated with caution in the central and south zone in Florida, may be recommended in the north zone in Florida (counties listed by zone at: http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment/pdfs/assess_counties.pdf)
Uses: not recommended for planting
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

Figure 1. Mature Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf Acacia
**Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf Acacia**

### Description

**Height:** 35 to 40 feet  
**Spread:** 25 to 35 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular  
**Crown shape:** round  
**Crown density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Figure 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** parallel  
**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:** showy

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure  
**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage  
**Current year twig color:** green  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

### Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

### Other

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no  
**Outstanding tree:** no  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant
**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

Seeds also germinate in the landscape and it has escaped cultivation in south Florida where it is becoming a mildly invasive weed in some areas. However, it is not as invasive as Australian pine or Brazilian pepper and probably will not become so. For these reasons, many people consider this to be an undesirable tree.

Earleaf Acacia grows in full sun on almost any soil including alkaline and is moderately salt-tolerant. It will withstand periods of water inundation but is also very tolerant of drought.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Occasionally anthracnose infects leaves.

**Literature Cited**