

Illicium floridanum Florida Anise Tree, Florida Anise¹

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Introduction

This rapidly growing, evergreen, Florida native shrub has olive green leaves and reddish-purple, starry, two-inch flowers (Fig. 1). The many slender branches of Florida anise droop to the ground, giving a rounded, open canopy in the shade, ideal for natural settings, or in sunny locations it can be pruned into dense hedges or windbreaks. The small, somewhat showy, maroon flowers appear in spring and are followed in late summer to fall by star-shaped, many-seeded pods which cling to the stems. The leaves of Florida anise give off a distinctive odor when bruised or crushed.

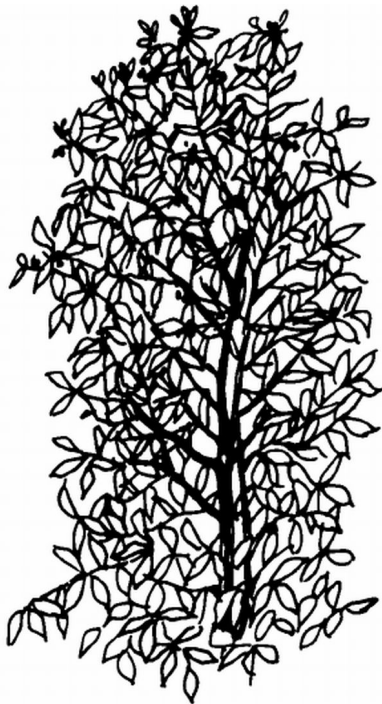


Figure 1. Florida anise tree

General Information

Scientific name: *Illicium floridanum*

Pronunciation: ill-LISS-see-um flor-rid-DAY-num

Common name(s): Florida anise tree, Florida anise

Family: *Illiciaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; espalier; screen; foundation; border

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range

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Description

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

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: undulate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: fragrant
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red
Flower characteristic: spring flowering; unpleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Culture

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

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Florida anise grows well in sun or shade, but thins out in the shade. Florida anise appreciates rich soil and ample moisture but will easily survive harsher conditions. It is an easy-to-grow, pest-free shrub. Once established it will need watering only during long periods of drought and pruning once a year to maintain its shrub form. It can be pruned and trained into a small, multi-trunked or single-trunked tree.

The cultivar 'Album' has white flowers.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.