

Coffea arabica Coffee¹

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Introduction

This medium-textured, dense, upright shrub has glossy, wavy-edged, unusually dark green leaves, fragrant, white, starry-shaped springtime flowers, and showy, fleshy, red berries. Each berry contains two seeds or coffee beans suitable for home roasting and grinding.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Coffea arabica*: Coffee
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf - *Coffea arabica*: Coffee
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Figure 3. Fruit - *Coffea arabica*: Coffee
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General Information

Scientific name: *Coffea arabica*

Pronunciation: KOFF-ee-uh uh-RAB-bick-uh

Common name(s): coffee

Family: *Rubiaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Figure 4)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: fruit; specimen; container or above-ground planter; hedge; near a deck or patio; espalier; border

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



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 8 to 15 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: whorled

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

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: white

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant; suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

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

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Reaching a height of 15 feet, coffee tree is a great conversation piece, growing in light rich soil and partial shade. Regular pruning can keep the plant attractive at any desirable size. This handsome shrub is suitable for containers, specimen plantings, or used as a small understory tree in hammocks and wild wooded areas. It also makes a nice backdrop in a shrub border. It has the potential to escape from cultivation.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

Coffee plants are bothered by scales, mites, thrips, caterpillars, and mineral deficiencies.

No diseases are of major concern.