

Illicium parviflorum Anise, Yellow Anisetree, Star Anise¹

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Introduction

This rapidly growing, large, evergreen, Florida native shrub has medium to coarse textured, olive green, leathery leaves and small, greenish-yellow flowers. The many, slender, drooping branches of anise give a rounded, open canopy in the shade that is ideal for natural settings, or it can be pruned into dense hedges, screens, or windbreaks in sunny locations. Branches often root when they touch the ground and root sprouts appear several years after planting. This adds to the density of the shrub. The slightly fragrant spring flowers are followed by brown, star-shaped, many-seeded pods that cling to the stems. The leaves of anise give off a distinctive fragrance of licorice when bruised or crushed.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Illicium parviflorum*: Anise, Yellow Anisetree, Star Anise
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf - *Illicium parviflorum*: Anise, Yellow Anisetree, Star Anise
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General Information

Scientific name: *Illicium parviflorum*

Pronunciation: ill-LISS-see-um par-vif-FLOR-um

Common name(s): anise, yellow anisetree, star anise

Family: *Illiciaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 10A (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

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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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: hedge; espalier; screen; foundation; border

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range

Description

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Plant habit: oval

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

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: yellow

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: 0.5 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

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Anise grows well in sun or shade but thins out in the shade. Anise appreciates rich soil and ample moisture but will easily survive harsher conditions. Anise 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. Plant on 5-to-7-foot centers to establish an unpruned screen, closer for a tall clipped hedge. Allow plenty of room for this shrub. It grows too large for a residential foundation planting but can be pruned into a small, multi-stemmed tree.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.