

Michelia doltsopa x *figo* 'Allspice' Allspice Banana Shrub¹

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Introduction

This selection of banana shrub is a dense, upright, ever-green shrub when young that eventually forms a rounded canopy. It attains a height of 10 to 15 feet in sunny locations with 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, 1½ 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.



Figure 2. Leaf - *Michelia doltsopa* x *figo* 'Allspice': Allspice Banana Shrub
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 1. Full Form - *Michelia doltsopa* x *figo* 'Allspice': Allspice Banana Shrub
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Figure 3. Flower - *Michelia doltsopa* x *figo* 'Allspice': Allspice Banana Shrub
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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 (Figure 4)

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zone 10: year-round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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 0.5 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

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.