

# *Pittosporum tobira* ‘Wheeleri’: Wheeler’s Dwarf *Pittosporum*<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

Wheeler’s dwarf pittosporum is a 3- to 4-foot tall, evergreen shrub that is rounded in form. This shrub will form a low, compact mound of dark green foliage, but with age it can also be pruned to form a picturesque, miniature tree in a container. The thick, leathery leaves of this plant are about 4 inches long. These glossy, dark green leaves have revolute margins and very short, nearly inconspicuous petioles. The flowers of Wheeler’s dwarf pittosporum are not noticeable, and this plant produces no fruit.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Pittosporum tobira* ‘Wheeleri’: Wheeler’s dwarf pittosporum.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Pittosporum tobira* ‘Wheeleri’: Wheeler’s dwarf pittosporum.

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## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Pittosporum tobira* ‘Wheeleri’

**Pronunciation:** pit-tuss-SPOR-rum toe-BYE-ruh

**Common name(s):** Wheeler’s dwarf pittosporum

**Family:** *Pittosporaceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Figure 3)

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture; and Gail Hansen, professor, sustainable landscape design; Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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**Planting month for zone 8:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year-round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year-round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; trained as a standard; ground cover; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 2 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; pleasant fragrance

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular

**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

**Current year stem/twig color:** gray/silver

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** moderate

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

This plant is wonderful for the front of shrub borders and is ideal for patios and terraces. It should not be planted next to or along a foundation because it does not tolerate poor drainage. Wheeler's dwarf pittosporum lends itself well to raised planters and containers and will provide a lovely background for annual beds. It makes a suitable tall ground cover planted on 4-foot centers. I have observed healthy plants most frequently along the coast where the wind helps keep the foliage and soils dry. Inland plantings of this cultivar do not appear to last very long.

This cultivar is not as cold hardy as the species and will be severely damaged at 10°F. *Pittosporum tobira* 'Wheeleri' should be planted in an area in which the topsoil has been prepared. The soil should be kept adequately moist, and the plant should be fertilized 2 to 3 times each year. Wheeler's dwarf pittosporum needs to be placed in an area of the landscape that receives full to partial sun. Pruning or shearing is not needed to maintain a neat, uniform shape. This cultivar is less tolerant to adverse growing conditions than the species. It can even be considered picky. Only plant if the soil drainage is excellent and a regular maintenance program can be provided including irrigation and fertilization.

Wheeler's dwarf pittosporum is commonly propagated by semi-hardwood or hardwood cuttings.

## Pests and Diseases

This cultivar is more susceptible to leaf spot disease than the species and may be occasionally bothered by mealy bugs.