

Polyscias pinnata Balfour Aralia¹

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Introduction

Balfour aralia is usually seen in its variegated form of glossy, light green leaves with irregular milk-white markings at its margins (Fig. 1). The stiffly upright growth habit, comprised of many stems, works well as a hedge or screen, or as a specimen. It grows nicely in a container for patio or terrace. The plant may thin out at the bottom as it grows older. Prune several of the older stems to the ground to encourage thicker foliage near the base.

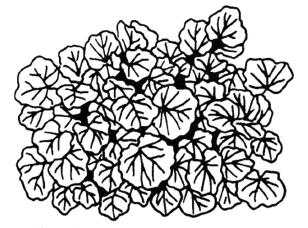


Figure 1. Balfour aralia

General Information

Scientific name: Polyscias pinnata

Pronunciation: poe-LISS-see-us pin-NAY-tuh

Common name(s): balfour aralia

Family: *Araliaceae* Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hedge; specimen; foundation; border; accent; cut foliage/twigs; suitable for growing indoors

Availability: generally available in many areas within its

hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet Spread: 2 to 4 feet Plant habit: round Plant density: dense Growth rate: slow Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

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Leaf type: trifoliate Leaf margin: dentate Leaf shape: ovate Leaf venation: palmate

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

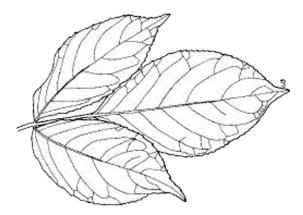


Figure 3. Foliage of balfour aralia

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the

year

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping

stems; 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;

plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; slightly alkaline;

sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: high Soil salt tolerances: unknown Plant spacing: 24 to 36 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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by

pests

Use and Management

Tolerant of salt spray, full sun, or deep shade, balfour aralia prefers moist, well-drained soil where it can be protected from frost. It grows well as a house plant if not over-watered. Plant on three- to four-foot centers to form a screen or mass planting. The variegated forms look good as a specimen or as an accent growing in a shrub border.

Propagation is by seeds, cuttings, or air layering.

Pests and Diseases

Mites can be a serious foliage problem, and plants also need to be checked for scale.

No diseases are of major concern.