

Cinnamomum camphora 'Monum': 'Monum' Camphor-Tree¹

Edward F. Gilman, Dennis G. Watson, Ryan W. Klein, and Deborah Hilbert²

Introduction

This round-canopied, evergreen tree has broad, large-diameter, unusually strong branches. The 'Monum' cultivar reportedly grows only to 40 feet in height with a narrower spread, contrasting with the larger size of the species. The glossy green, thin and leathery leaves give off a camphor aroma when crushed and create dense shade. Leaves of this cultivar are larger than the species. The stems and bark on young branches of camphor-tree are bright green, tinged with red when young, maturing into a dark grey-brown, rugged-looking trunk which appears almost black when wet from rain. Trunk and branch structure on older trees appear similar to mature live oaks. The inconspicuous, tiny, yellow flowers are followed by a profusion of small, black berries which can become an annoyance on walks and driveways because they are messy but are quite attractive to wildlife. Fruits will stain cars. Some occasionally germinate below the tree but not nearly as much of a problem as some other trees. Birds can also carry the seed to remote areas where it will occasionally germinate. The species is considered invasive in north and central Florida, and is therefore not recommended in those regions, but may be used with caution in south Florida. The leaves, twigs, and wood are the commercial source of camphor. The dried bark of *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* yields cinnamon.

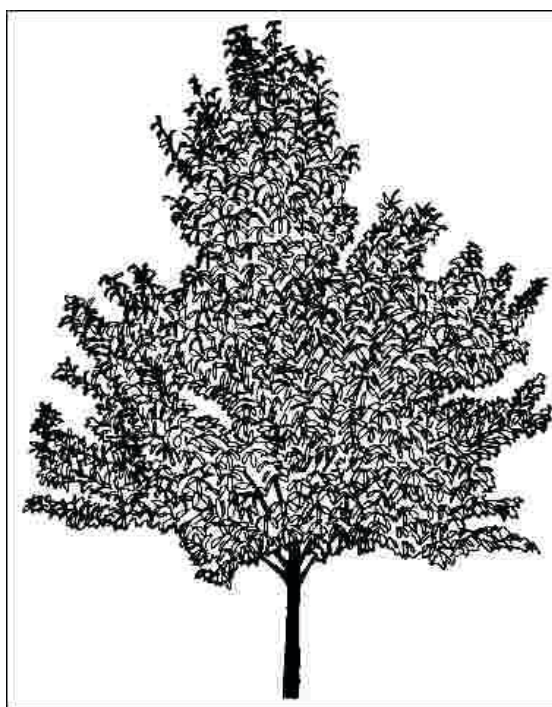


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Cinnamomum camphora* 'Monum': 'Monum' camphor-tree.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cinnamomum camphora*

Pronunciation: sin-uh-MOE-mum kam-FOR-uh

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor emeritus; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering; Ryan W. Klein, assistant professor, arboriculture; and Deborah R. Hilbert, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center; Department of Environmental Horticulture; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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Common name(s): 'Monum' camphor-tree

Family: *Lauraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Figure 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: invasive and not recommended (North, Central); caution, may be recommended but manage to prevent escape (South)

Uses: urban tolerant; screen; shade

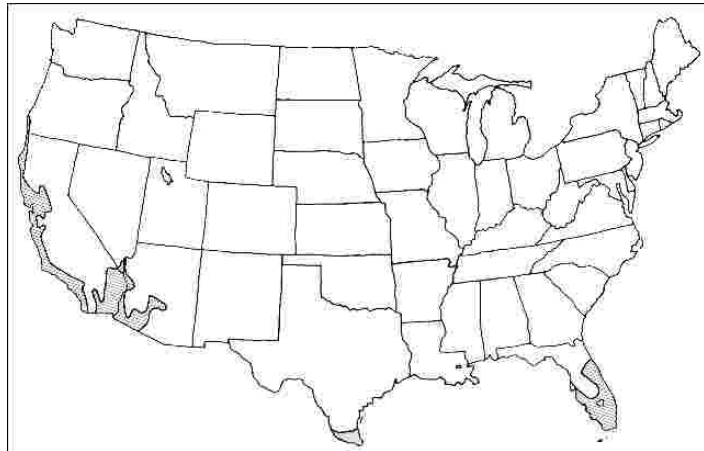


Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 35 to 40 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: round

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Figure 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate, obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, broadleaf evergreen, fragrant

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

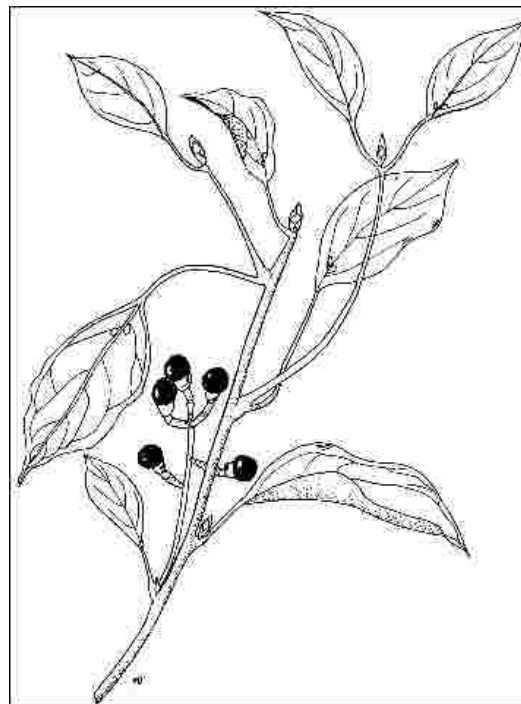


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade

Soil tolerances: sand; loam; clay; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Other

Roots: can form large surface roots

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

This cultivar of camphor-tree is ideally used as a shade tree in parks or medium or large-sized landscapes. It might be suited for street tree planting where cars do not park and sidewalk usage is low. Prune to develop major branches, space 18 to 30 inches apart along a central trunk to develop good structure. Do not allow major branches to grow from the same spot on the trunk and avoid upright, multi-trunked trees. It may be difficult to maintain a lawn beneath the dense shade of a camphor-tree and a shade-tolerant groundcover may better suit the purpose. The trunk on older specimens of the species grows to six feet or more in diameter and is quite picturesque, but the cultivar is probably much smaller. Shallow roots can be a nuisance. The

species is considered invasive in north and central Florida and should be used with caution in south Florida.

It can be grown in full sun to partial shade. Camphor-tree is amenable to a variety of soils, will grow but often develops minor element deficiencies on alkaline soils. Camphor-tree is highly tolerant of urban conditions but will not tolerate water-logged soils. It is adapted to grow along the coast exposed to some sea salt.

Pests

Scales and mites are common problems on camphor-trees. Seeds of the species can germinate easily in the landscape.

Diseases

Camphor-Tree is subject to root rot, especially in poorly-drained soils.

Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker. 2008. UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas: Status Assessment. Cited from the Internet (November 16, 2012), https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment/pdfs/status_assessment.pdf