

Illicium floridanum Florida Anise Tree, Florida Anise¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

This rapidly growing, evergreen, Florida native shrub has olive green leaves and reddish-purple, starry, two-inch flowers (Fig. 1). The many slender branches of Florida anise droop to the ground, giving a rounded, open canopy in the shade, ideal for natural settings, or in sunny locations it can be pruned into dense hedges or windbreaks. The small, somewhat showy, maroon flowers appear in spring and are followed in late summer to fall by star-shaped, many-seeded pods which cling to the stems. The leaves of Florida anise give off a distinctive odor when bruised or crushed.

General Information

Scientific name: *Illicium floridanum*

Pronunciation: ill-LISS-see-um flor-rid-DAY-num

Common name(s): Florida anise tree, Florida anise

Family: *Illiciaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

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

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; espalier; screen; foundation; border

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet



Figure 1. Florida anise tree

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: oval

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: ovate

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: red

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; unpleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: .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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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

Use and Management

Florida anise grows well in sun or shade, but thins out in the shade. Florida anise appreciates rich soil and ample moisture but will easily survive harsher conditions. It 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. It can be pruned and trained into a small, multi-trunked or single-trunked tree.

The cultivar 'Album' has white flowers.

Propagation is by cuttings or layering.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.