

FPS403

Michelia doltsopa x figo 'Allspice' Allspice Banana Shrub¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

This selection of banana shrub is a dense, upright, evergreen shrub when young that eventually forms a rounded canopy (Fig. 1). Leaf size is about half way between the two parents. It attains a height of 10 to 15 feet in sunny locations. It has 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, 1 1/2-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.

General Information

Scientific name: Michelia doltsopa x figo 'Allspice'

Pronunciation: my-KEEL-lee-uh dolt-SOE-puh FYE-go

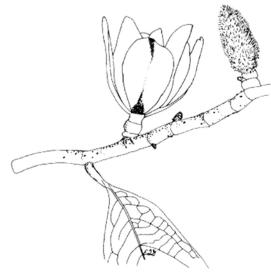


Figure 1. 'Allspice' banana shrub

Common name(s): 'Allspice' banana shrub

Family: Magnoliaceae

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 10: year round Leaf margin: entire Origin: not native to North America Leaf shape: oblong Uses: near a deck or patio; specimen; espalier; screen; Leaf venation: pinnate border Leaf type and persistence: evergreen Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches of the region to find the plant Leaf color: green Description Fall color: no fall color change Height: 10 to 20 feet Fall characteristic: not showy Spread: 6 to 15 feet Flower Plant habit: upright Flower color: yellow Plant density: dense Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring Growth rate: moderate flowering Texture: medium Fruit Foliage Fruit shape: oval Leaf arrangement: alternate Fruit length: less than .5 inch Leaf type: simple Fruit cover: dry or hard

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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

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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.