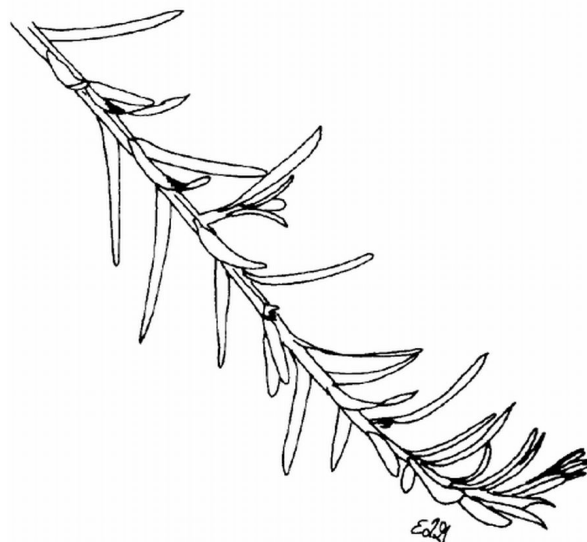


## ***Taxus floridana* Florida Yew<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

This lovely Florida native is an evergreen shrub or small tree. It grows slowly to a height of 20 feet (Fig. 1). The horizontally held, spreading branches are clothed with short, dark green needles that look pointed but are actually very soft to the touch. New growth is bright green, making a nice contrast to the darker, mature foliage. Insignificant flowers are produced in March on female plants and are followed by single-seeded, small, pulpy fruits, ripening to red in the fall. Both leaves and fruit of Florida yew are poisonous.



**Figure 1.** Florida yew

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Taxus floridana*

**Pronunciation:** TACK-suss flor-rid-DAY-nuh

**Common name(s):** Florida yew

**Family:** *Taxaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8 through 9A (Fig. 2)

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

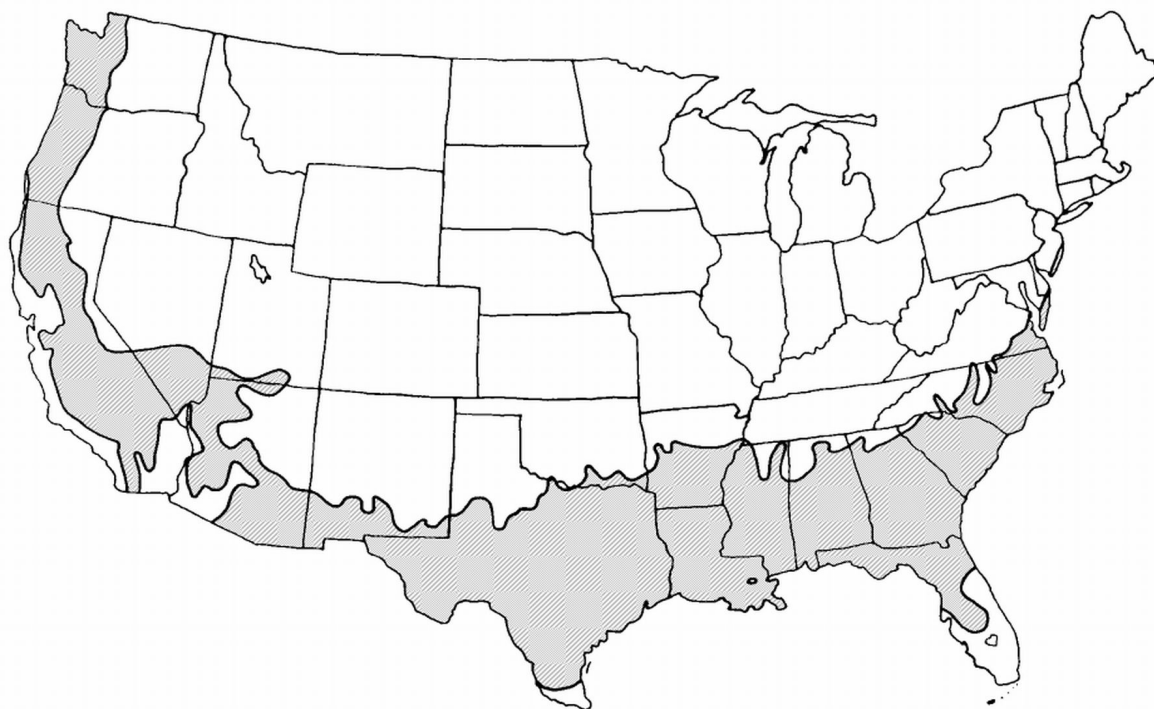
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** near a deck or patio; screen; attracts butterflies; superior hedge

1. This document is FPS-573, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date October, 1999. Reviewed May, 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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



**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**Description**

**Height:** 10 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet

**Plant habit:** oval; vase shape

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** no flowers

**Flower characteristic:** no flowers

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** irregular

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** red

**Fruit characteristic:** attracts birds

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

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

## Culture

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

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**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:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

The dense, compact growth of Florida yew makes it ideal for use as a specimen, hedge, or foundation planting, but Florida yew is seldom seen in nurseries and should be used much more often in home landscapes in order to save it from extinction. In the wild, Florida yew is found only in a small section of north Florida on the eastern shore of the Apalachicola River where it will ultimately be threatened by encroaching developments.

Florida yew should be grown in conditions that can mimic its native habitat as much as possible: broken shade on rich, slightly acid, well-drained soil. Plants should be watered faithfully.

Propagation is by cuttings. Mature wood cuttings taken in winter root well under mist.

## Pest and Diseases

Scales.

Mushroom root-rot.