Variegated False Holly

Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Goshiki'

Variegated False Holly foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6a

Other Names: Tea Olive, Olive Holly, Holly-Leaf Osmanthus

Description:

This cultivar is similar in looks to holly, but it's actually related to lilac and privet; beautiful golden-variegated leaves are quite ornamental; flowers may not be showy but are extremely fragrant, blooming in fall; more adaptable than holly

Ornamental Features

Variegated False Holly has attractive gold-variegated green foliage which emerges harvest gold in spring on a plant with an oval habit of growth. The spiny pointy leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. It features subtle fragrant white flowers along the branches in mid fall. The smooth khaki (brownish-green) bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Variegated False Holly
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Variegated False Holly is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Variegated False Holly is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- Topiary

Planting & Growing

Variegated False Holly will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It has a low canopy, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.