UNC Sweet Olive

Osmanthus x fortunei 'UNC'



UNC Sweet Olive
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Tea Olive, False Holly, Olive Holly

Description:

A rare and beautiful variety with spiny, lustrous leaves that are holly-like, but it's actually related to lilac and privet; a rounded shrub or small tree, covered with fragrant, cream trumpet flowers in fall; more adaptable than holly

Ornamental Features

UNC Sweet Olive is covered in stunning fragrant creamy white tubular flowers along the branches in early fall. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The small spiny oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The smooth dark gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

UNC Sweet Olive is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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 tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

UNC Sweet Olive is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Topiary

Planting & Growing

UNC Sweet Olive will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, 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 tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid.