Lignum Vitae

Guaiacum sanctum



Lignum Vitae
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 30 feet

Spread: 25 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Palo Santo, Holywood, Wood Of Life

Description:

A very slow growing, multi-stemmed, broadleaf evergreen tree or large shrub that is great for dry, coastal areas; blooms on and off throughout the year, but mostly in early spring; an excellent border or container plant

Ornamental Features

Lignum Vitae is bathed in stunning clusters of lavender star-shaped flowers with blue overtones along the branches from late winter to late fall. The fruits are showy yellow pods carried in abundance from early summer to late fall. It has dark green evergreen foliage. The glossy oval leaves remain dark green throughout the winter. The smooth brown bark and gray branches are extremely showy and add significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Lignum Vitae is a 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 tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Lignum Vitae is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Lignum Vitae will grow to be about 30 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 25 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet 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 80 years or more.

This tree 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 may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.

Lignum Vitae is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.