# Mexican Anise Tree

***Illicium mexicanum***



*Mexican Anise Tree flowers*
*Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 8

**Description:**

Glossy evergreen foliage smells like anise when crushed; produces star-shaped seeds similar to the culinary anise, but toxic; vivid red, spidery flowers from spring into fall on this dense growing shrub

## Ornamental Features

Mexican Anise Tree features solitary nodding double crimson frilly flowers with buttery yellow eyes rising above the foliage from mid spring to mid fall. It has dark green evergreen foliage. The glossy narrow leaves remain dark green throughout the winter. It produces brown capsules in late summer.

## Landscape Attributes

Mexican Anise Tree is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub 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 shrub, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Mexican Anise Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

## Planting & Growing

Mexican Anise Tree will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub does best in partial shade to full shade. Keep it well away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. 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 very fussy about its soil conditions and must have rich, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Mexican Anise Tree makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants 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.