Texas Madrone

Arbutus xalapensis



Texas Madrone foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 16 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 9

Description:

A multi-trunked selection with a broad dense crown; clusters of flowers, produced year-round; thin, exfoliating bark reveals polished red inner bark; edible, small red berries can be used for preserves or cooking, although my be restricted in some areas

Edible Qualities

Texas Madrone is a small tree that is typically grown for its edible qualities. It produces small clusters of red round berries with black overtones which are usually ready for picking from mid summer to early fall. The berries have a sweet taste and a mealy texture.

The berries are most often used in the following ways:

- Eating When Cooked/Prepared
- Cooking
- Preserves

Features & Attributes

Texas Madrone features showy clusters of white bell-shaped flowers hanging below the branches from mid fall to late winter. It has green foliage edged in red which emerges light green in spring. The oval leaves turn brown in the fall, which persists throughout the winter. The peeling antique red bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

This is a dense evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Texas Madrone is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent

Planting & Growing

Texas Madrone will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 16 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This plant is typically grown in a designated edibles garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.