Bluebush

Diospyros lycioides



Bluebush fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Star-Apple, Monkey Plum

Description:

A large shrub or small tree that can be single or multi-stemmed; production of the sweet fruit requires both male and female trees; evergreen in certain climates; soft pulpy fruit can be eaten fresh, while seeds can be used as a coffee substitute

Edible Qualities

Bluebush is a small tree that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. It produces orange round fruit (technically 'pomes') which are usually ready for picking from early fall to early winter. The fruits have a sweet taste and a fleshy texture.

The fruit are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Baking
- Preserves



Bluebush
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Features & Attributes

Bluebush has grayish green evergreen foliage on a tree with a round habit of growth. The oval leaves remain grayish green throughout the winter.

This is an open multi-stemmed evergreen tree with a more or less rounded 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 high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds and squirrels to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

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

- Accent
- Shade
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping

Planting & Growing

Bluebush 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 2 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 60 years or more. This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

This tree can be integrated into a landscape or flower garden by creative gardeners, but is usually grown in a designated edibles garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America.