California Scrub Oak

Quercus berberidifolia

Height: 10 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Barberry-leaved Scrub Oak

Description:

A small, slow growing and long lived evergreen shrub that eventually forms a dense mounded habit with leathery, holly-like leaves; late winter to spring flowers are followed by small fat acorns; provide occasional summer water until established

Ornamental Features

California Scrub Oak has dark green foliage with grayish green undersides on a plant with a mounded habit of growth. The spiny oval leaves remain dark green throughout the winter. It produces tan acorns with olive green blush from mid summer to mid fall, which fade to black over time. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up.

Landscape Attributes

California Scrub Oak is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a mounded 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.



California Scrub Oak
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



California Scrub Oak foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This shrub will require occasional maintenance 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, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy

California Scrub Oak is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

California Scrub Oak will grow to be about 10 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 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 to a ripe old age of 150 years or more; think of this as a heritage shrub for future generations!

This shrub should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America.