Madagascar Olive

Noronhia emarginata

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Description:

A tough evergreen shrub or small tree with smooth gray bark and stout branches; large, leathery oval leaves are olive green and notched at the apex; flowers are inconspicuous but fragrant; well suited for coastal locations with salt spray and wind



Madagascar Olive foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Madagascar Olive
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Madagascar Olive is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The fruits are showy yellow drupes which fade to deep purple over time, which are carried in abundance from early winter to late fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. It has attractive olive green foliage with grayish green undersides. The large oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain olive green throughout the winter. It features subtle clusters of fragrant yellow cup-shaped flowers with white overtones along the branches from early winter to late fall. The smooth gray bark and tan branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

This plant is primarily grown as an ornamental, but it's also valued for its edible qualities. The round sweet fruit is most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Eating When Cooked/Prepared
- Pickling

Landscape Attributes

Madagascar Olive is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a shapely oval form. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and can be pruned at anytime. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Madagascar Olive is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Madagascar Olive will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 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 approximately 30 years. This is a self-pollinating variety, so it doesn't require a second plant nearby to set fruit.

This shrub 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 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, 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 not originally from North America.