Redbay

Persea borbonia



Redbay
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 30 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Red Bay

Description:

A native evergreen tree or large shrub found in coastal forests or other consistently moist habitats; inconspicuous yellow-green flowers are followed by fruit that is a food source for birds; lush foliage is deep green and glossy; a lovely accent tree

Ornamental Features

Redbay has attractive dark green foliage with grayish green undersides on a tree with an oval habit of growth. The fragrant oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The fruits are showy royal blue drupes which fade to black over time, which are displayed from late summer to mid winter. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The furrowed brown bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Redbay is an evergreen tree with a shapely oval 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 relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Disease

Redbay is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Hedges/Screening
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Bog Gardens

Planting & Growing

Redbay will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.