Ombu Tree

Phytolacca dioica

Height: 30 feet

Spread: 30 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Bella Sombra Tree, Belombra, Elephant Tree

Description:

A fast growing and long-lived evergreen tree that is uniquely swollen at the base, appearing as though the tree is on a mound; can be massive in ideal conditions, but is usually much smaller in cultivation; do not plant near any structures



Ombu Tree foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Ombu Tree features showy white catkins with creamy white overtones hanging below the branches from early summer to early fall. It has attractive forest green foliage with creamy white veins which emerges light green in spring. The large glossy oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain forest green throughout the winter. It produces yellow berries with gold overtones from early fall to early winter, 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. The smooth gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.



Ombu Tree
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Ombu Tree is a multi-stemmed evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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 can be pruned at anytime. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Ombu Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Ombu Tree will grow to be about 30 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 100 years or more; think of this as a heritage tree for future generations! 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.