Jim Porter Tea Olive

Osmanthus armatus 'Jim Porter'



Jim Porter Tea Olive foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: False Holly, Holly Olive, Devil Wood

Description:

A dense, upright evergreen shrub or small tree, with spiny, lustrous green leaves are holly-like with long spines; fragrant, tiny white flowers in axillary clusters appear in early fall; forms an excellent screen or hedge, great for shrub borders

Ornamental Features

Jim Porter Tea Olive is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its decidedly oval form. It is covered in stunning clusters of fragrant white tubular flowers along the branches from late summer to mid fall. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The spiny pointy leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The smooth gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Jim Porter Tea Olive is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub 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 shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies 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;

- Spiny

Jim Porter Tea Olive is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Topiary
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Jim Porter Tea Olive will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 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 for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in a location that gets morning sunlight but is shaded from the hot afternoon sun, although it will also grow in partial shade. Keep it away from hot, dry locations that receive direct afternoon sun or which get reflected sunlight, such as against the south side of a white wall. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Jim Porter Tea Olive makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.