Tea Olive

Osmanthus delavayi



Tea Olive flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 9 feet

Spread: 9 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: False Holly, Olive Holly

Description:

To the untrained eye, this looks like a holly with its spiny lustrous leaves, but it's actually related to lilac and privet; branches are arching and covered with fragrant, white trumpet flowers; more adaptable than holly

Ornamental Features

Tea Olive is covered in stunning fragrant white tubular flowers along the branches in mid summer. It has attractive dark green evergreen foliage. The small spiny oval leaves are highly ornamental and remain dark green throughout the winter. The smooth dark gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.



Tea Olive in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Tea Olive is a dense multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a shapely form and gracefully arching branches. 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 is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Tea Olive is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

Tea Olive will grow to be about 9 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 9 feet. It tends to fill out right to the ground and therefore doesn't necessarily require facer plants in front, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 40 years or more.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. 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. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.