Acacia auriculiformis  
Earleaf Acacia¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Quickly reaching a height of 40 feet and a spread of 25 feet, Earleaf Acacia becomes a loose, rounded, evergreen, open shade tree (Fig. 1). It is often planted for its abundance of small, beautiful, bright yellow flowers and fast growth. The flattened, curved branchlets, which look like leaves, are joined by twisted, brown, ear-shaped seed pods. Growing 6 to 8 feet per year, Earleaf Acacia quickly grows into a medium-sized shade tree. This makes it a popular tree. However, it has brittle wood and weak branch crotches, and the tree can be badly damaged during wind storms. Prune branches so there is a wide angle of attachment to help them from splitting from the tree. Also be sure to keep the major branches pruned back so they stay less than half the diameter of the trunk. These techniques might increase the longevity of existing trees.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Acacia auriculiformis  
Pronunciation: uh-KAY-shuh  
ah-rik-yoo-lih-FOR-miss  
Common name(s): Earleaf Acacia  
Family: Leguminosae  
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)  
Origin: not native to North America  
Uses: not recommended for planting  
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 40 feet  
Spread: 25 to 35 feet  
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette  
Crown shape: round  
Crown density: moderate  
Growth rate: fast  
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: entire  
Leaf shape: linear  
Leaf venation: parallel  
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

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**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** yellow  
**Flower characteristics:** showy; spring flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** irregular  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure  
**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break  
**Current year twig color:** green  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** No entries found.  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.
USE AND MANAGEMENT

Seeds also germinate in the landscape and it has escaped cultivation in south Florida where it is becoming a mildly invasive weed in some areas. However, it is not as invasive as Australian pine or Brazilian pepper and probably will not become so. For these reasons, many people consider this to be an undesirable tree.

Earleaf Acacia grows in full sun on almost any soil including alkaline and is moderately salt-tolerant. It will withstand periods of water inundation but is also very tolerant of drought.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Occasionally anthracnose infects leaves.