**Calophyllum brasiliense**
Santa Maria

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This upright, bushy, medium to coarse-textured evergreen tree is densely foliated with four-inch-long, leathery leaves (Fig. 1). Although able to reach 50 feet in height in the forest, Santa Maria tends to be a slow-growing, moderately-sized tree about 30 to 40 feet tall with a 40 to 50-foot spread. It is well-suited for planting beneath power lines 40 feet high. Small, white, fragrant flowers appear on one to two-inch-long racemes among the four to six-inch-long, glossy leaves. Well-suited as a street, parking lot, patio or small shade tree, especially for coastal areas, Santa Maria can also be used as a screen, and can be maintained as a shrub. The stems bleed a yellow latex when injured and the wood of the Santa Maria tree is valuable for ship building and cabinet work. The bark is almost black and is longitudinally furrowed and quite attractive.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** *Calophyllum brasiliense*
- **Pronunciation:** kal-oh-FILL-um bruh-sill-ee-EN-see
- **Common name(s):** Santa Maria
- **Family:** Clusiaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** container or above-ground planter; espalier; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (> 6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; screen; shade tree; specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 30 to 40 feet
- **Spread:** 40 to 50 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-114, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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Crown shape: oval; round; pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Santa Maria should be planted in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soil. It has good salt tolerance and is often seen along the beach. Grows well in confined soil spaces, such as along a street, and the tree should be propagated, sold and planted in urban areas much more often. Remember that the golfball-sized fruit is poisonous and hard, and this could be undesirable in the landscape under some circumstances. The trunk grows to about two feet in diameter.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.