**Noronhia emarginata**
Madagascar Olive

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**INTRODUCTION**

A very tough tree well-suited for coastal and seaside locations, Madagascar Olive is an attractive, upright oval, evergreen with six-inch-long, leathery, olive green leaves and a high tolerance for salt and wind (Fig. 1). The crown appears to stay well-formed even right up on the coast where it is exposed to salt spray. It reaches a height of 20 feet with a 15 to 20-foot-spread. The inconspicuous but fragrant, small yellow blooms are followed by one-inch-diameter, bright yellow fruits, turning to dark purple, with a sweet, edible, cream-colored flesh, which add to the tree’s ornamental value. The dropping fruit may be undesirable to some people when planted near walks or pavement, but properly located in a bed or lawn is of little concern.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

*Scientific name:* Noronhia emarginata  
*Pronunciation:* nor-RAWN-ee-uh  
*ee-mar-jih-NAY-tuh*  
*Common name(s):* Madagascar Olive  
*Family:* Oleaceae  
*USDA hardness zones:* 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)  
*Origin:* not native to North America  
*Uses:* container or above-ground planter; espalier; fruit tree; 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; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); 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:* generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

**DESCRIPTION**

*Height:* 20 to 25 feet  
*Spread:* 15 to 20 feet  
*Crown uniformity:* irregular outline or silhouette
**Crown shape:** oval; vase shape  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

- **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)  
- **Leaf type:** simple  
- **Leaf margin:** entire  
- **Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); obovate  
- **Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate  
- **Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen  
- **Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
- **Leaf color:** green  
- **Fall color:** no fall color change  
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

- **Flower color:** yellow  
- **Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; year round flowering

### Fruit

- **Fruit shape:** round  
- **Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch  
- **Fruit covering:** fleshy  
- **Fruit color:** green; purple; yellow  
- **Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; suited for human consumption; no significant litter problem; showy

### Trunk and Branches

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns  
- **Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure  
- **Breakage:** resistant  
- **Current year twig color:** brown; green  
- **Current year twig thickness:** thick

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.
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
Soil 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: little, if any, potential at this time
Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing easily in full sun or partial shade, Madagascar Olive is quite adaptable to a wide range of soils. It works well as a dense screen or windbreak, and can form an ideal specimen or framing tree for landscapes with limited room after the lower branches are removed. A cluster of trees creates a handsome, informal grouping. This is a tough small tree which is suitable for many locations. Use it to create shade on a patio or grow it in a large, heavy container on a deck. The small size makes it ideal for planting along streets where there are overhead power lines.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.