



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Mahonia fortunei*¹

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Introduction

This upright, multi-stemmed evergreen shrub makes an attractive mass planting or north-side foundation planting in the shade where its soft, narrow, pinnate leaves lend a tropical effect (Fig. 1). New leaves emerge with iridescent burgundy tips. Use it in groups of three or more, or as a single specimen in small gardens. It can be placed in front of other shrubs which thin out at the bottom because mahonia stays full to the ground. Tallest canes fall over and grow horizontally as they reach about three or four feet tall. This creates a shrub about six feet wide with a rounded form. Plant on three to four foot centers in a mass planting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Mahonia fortunei*

Pronunciation: mah-HOE-nee-uh for-TOON-nee-eye

Common name(s): Fortune's Mahonia

Family: *Berberidaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 9 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; mass planting; specimen; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 1. Fortune's Mahonia.

Description

Height: 3 to 5 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: upright; round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-377, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** odd-pinnately compound
- Leaf margin:** spiny
- Leaf shape:** linear
- Leaf venation:** pinnate
- Leaf type and persistence:** 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 characteristic:** spring flowering; fall flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- Fruit cover:** fleshy
- Fruit color:** black

Fruit characteristic: rarely fruits

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- Current year stem/twig color:** brown
- Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

Culture

- Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade
- Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- Drought tolerance:** moderate
- Soil salt tolerances:** unknown
- Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Eventually reaching four feet but still retaining the lower, dark green foliage, Fortune's Mahonia almost appears to have been clipped into its natural hedge form. Small, showy yellow flowers appear in spring, summer, or fall and are followed by inconspicuous blue-black berries which are popular with birds. The plant combines nicely with Holly Fern and other ferns planted several feet in front of Fortune's Mahonia, perhaps due to the fern-like, fine-textured foliage.

It is generally pest-free, and Fortune's Mahonia can endure the hottest locations and fairly low soil moisture conditions but does need protection from the direct rays of the sun. A partially shaded or full shade setting is perfect. It prefers a well-drained, slightly acid soil.

Propagation is from cuttings or seeds.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Several leaf spots may be seen, but infected leaves can be picked off and destroyed.

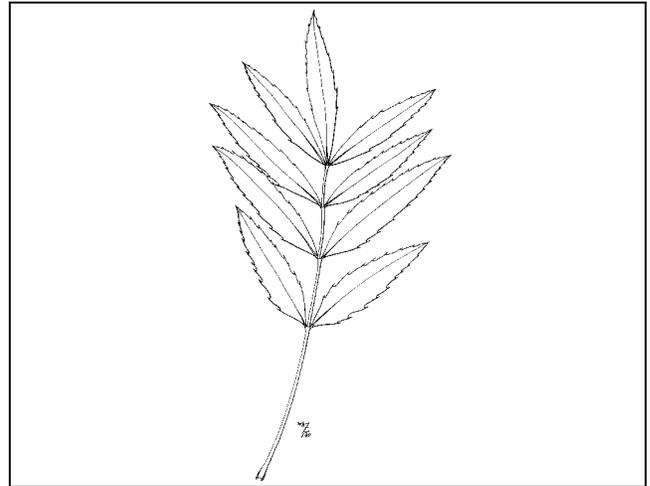


Figure 3. Foliage of Fortune's Mahonia