



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Schefflera arboricola¹

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Introduction

This evergreen shrub has attractive dark green, glossy, palmate leaves densely covering flexible, green stems which gently fan out into a rounded crown (Fig. 1). Plants are usually seen with multiple stems sprouting from the base. Branching can be encouraged by pinching the stems, which forms a denser shrub. It can be pruned into a small tree over a period of years where it would make an accent or patio tree. The tree remains a green mass, not changing during the year, except when it displays the brilliant orange-yellow fruit in the winter.

General Information

Scientific name: *Schefflera arboricola*

Pronunciation: sheff-LEER-ruh ar-bore-rick-KOLE-luh

Common name(s): Dwarf Schefflera

Family: *Araliaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; container or above-ground planter; specimen; hedge; espalier

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 6 to 15 feet

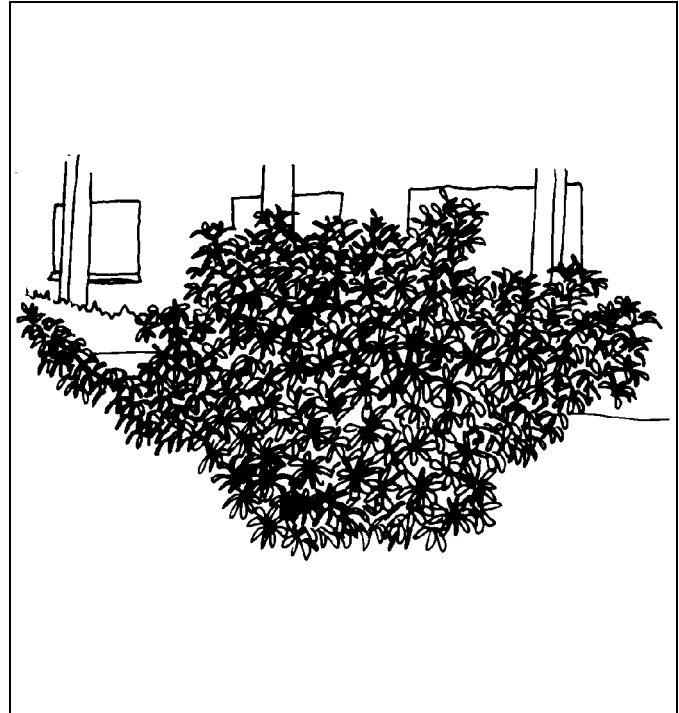


Figure 1. Dwarf Schefflera.

Plant habit: vase shape

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: palmately compound
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: obovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: green
Flower characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: orange
Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; no thorns
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade; plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; well-drained; sand; loam; slightly alkaline
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: not applicable

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

A popular house plant, Dwarf Schefflera performs well in a variety of outdoor settings. It can be used as a hedge, specimen planting, poolside container plant, and even trains well into an espalier on the wall of a building. Aerial roots originate from the lower portions of the trunks and branches, and root into the ground.

Dwarf Schefflera is adaptable to sun, part sun or deep shade and does best on light, sandy, well-drained soils. The plant prefers soil which is kept on the dry side. One of the best hedges for shady areas.

There is a cultivar available with variegated foliage.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or air-layers.

Scale and spider mites may be a problem when Dwarf Schefflera is grown indoors but outdoors pest problems are rare. Occasionally scale may infest this tree.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.



Figure 3. Foliage of Dwarf Schefflera