



Ilex vomitoria Yaupon Holly¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This upright, spreading small evergreen tree or large shrub, capable of reaching 15 to 25 feet in height with a similar spread, has small, grey-green, leathery leaves densely arranged along smooth, stiff, light grey branches (Fig. 1). Plants in the landscape require about 10-years to develop a distinct vase-shape. Sometimes clipped into a tight hedge, Yaupon Holly is ideal for training into a small tree with lower branches removed to reveal the interestingly-contorted multiple trunks. It can also be used for topiaries, espaliers, specimens, screens, or barriers. The non-showy male and female flowers appear on separate plants and are followed on the female plants by the production of brilliant red berries (yellow on some cultivars) which are quite attractive to wildlife. The flowers attract bees for several weeks. Purchase plants with berries on them (females) if you want a berry-producing plant, or buy trees which were propagated from cuttings of female plants.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ilex vomitoria*

Pronunciation: EYE-lecks vom-ih-TOR-ee-uh

Common name(s): Yaupon Holly

Family: *Aquifoliaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; 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);

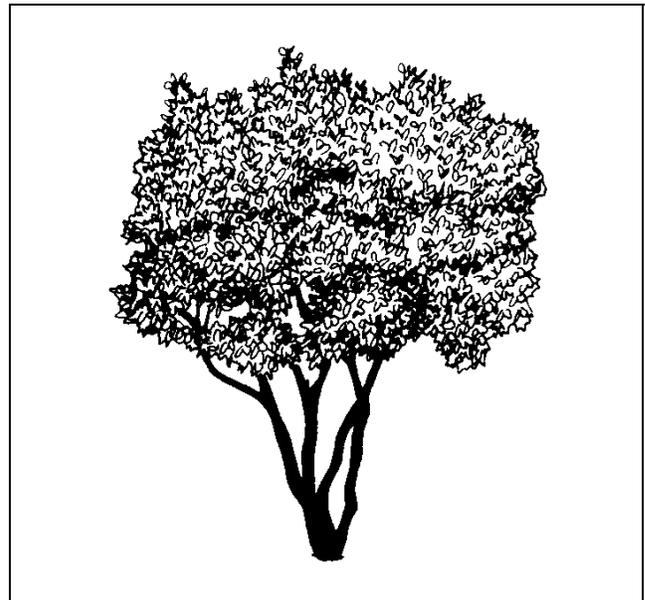


Figure 1. Middle-aged Yaupon Holly.

recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; 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

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet
Spread: 15 to 20 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: round; vase shape
Crown density: open
Growth rate: medium
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: crenate; serrulate
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate; reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: < .5 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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

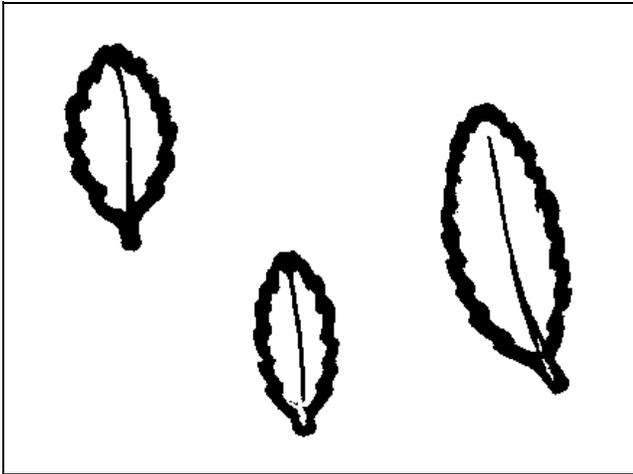


Figure 3. Foliage of Yaupon Holly.

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: gray

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerance: good

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: seeds itself into the landscape

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

A tough native of the southern United States, Yaupon Holly grows quickly in a variety of locations, from full sun or shade to seaside or swamps, in sand or clay. Crowns will be thin in the shade. It will grow in soil with a pH in the 7's and is very tolerant of drought and sea salt, It sprouts readily from the roots forming clumps of upright shoots beneath the

canopy. Sprouting is most troublesome if the soil beneath the canopy is disturbed, as in planting shrubs or flowers under the tree. These need to be pruned to the ground two or three times each year to maintain a neat appearance. Consider this when selecting trees for use on streets, parking lots, and other low-maintenance areas since thickets often form.

Yaupon Holly is one of the most durable and adaptable of the small-leaved evergreen Hollies for use in southern landscapes. It grows well throughout its range in sidewalk cutouts and other sites with limited exposed soil. Wild Yaupons are protected by Florida statute.

A few of the available cultivars include: 'Folsom's Weeping', similar to 'Pendula'; 'Jewel', female plant with heavy fruit production; 'Nana', dwarf, compact shrub form, male plant, no berries; 'Pendula' ('Grey's Weeping'), large weeping specimen, sparsely foliated, to 35 feet tall; 'Pride of Houston', medium-sized shrub with heavy fruit production; and a low shrub called 'Schelling's Dwarf' ('Stroke's Dwarf'), more compact than 'Nana'. Yellow-fruited cultivars include: 'Aureo', yellow berries; 'Otis Miley', small leaves, yellow fruit; 'Wiggins' Yellow', yellow fruit.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests

Scale, leaf miners, mites, aphids appear to form a long list of problems, but none are normally serious.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.