



Noronhia emarginata Madagascar Olive¹

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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 hardiness 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

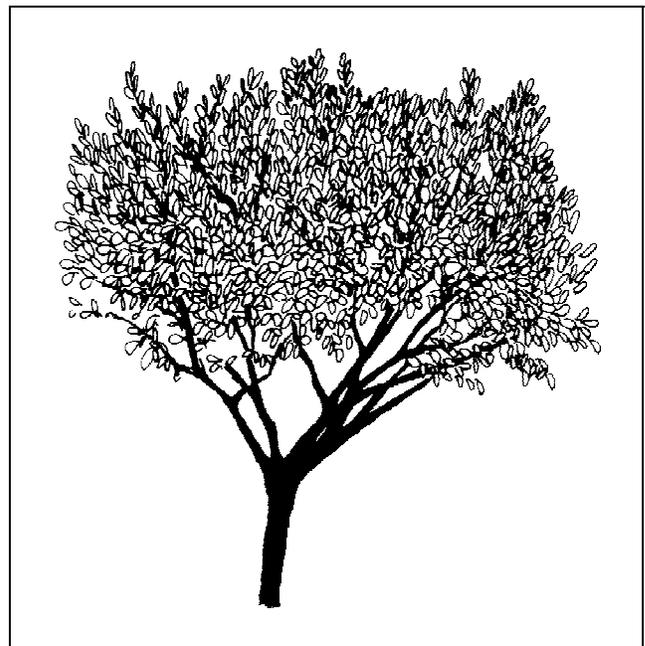


Figure 1. Middle-aged Madagascar Olive.

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

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

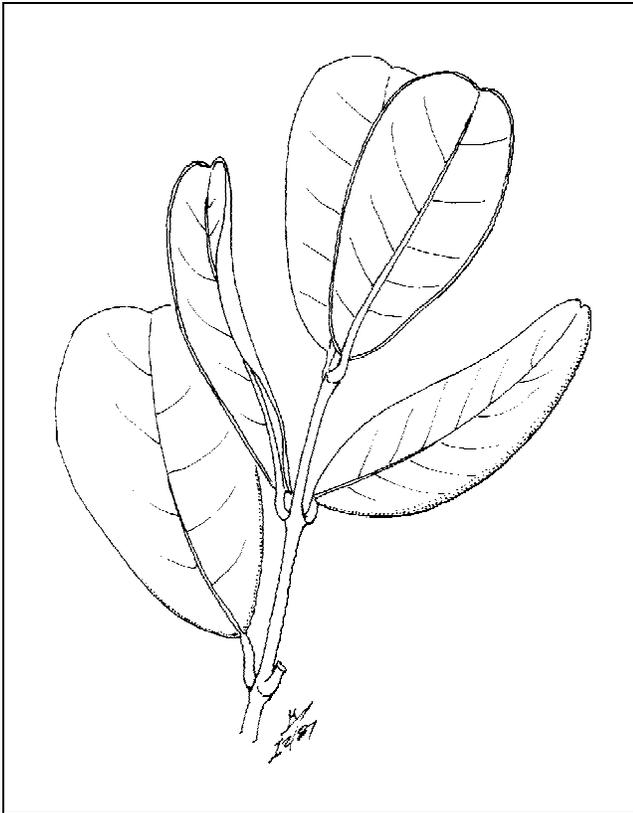


Figure 3. Foliage of Madagascar Olive.

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.

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,