



Ochrosia elliptica Ochrosia¹

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INTRODUCTION

This large, upright, evergreen shrub or small tree has glossy, leathery leaves and clusters of fragrant, yellow/white flowers from late summer into winter, followed by bright red, two-inch-long, poisonous fruit borne in pairs (Fig. 1). The fruit is poisonous. It will make a nice tree for a patio area providing shade with the lower branches removed, or a visual screen of coarse, dense foliage without growing too tall. It is suited for planting beneath power lines due to maximum height of 20 to 25 feet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ochrosia elliptica*

Pronunciation: oh-KROE-zee-uh ee-LIP-tih-kuh

Common name(s): Ochrosia

Family: *Apocynaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; espalier; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

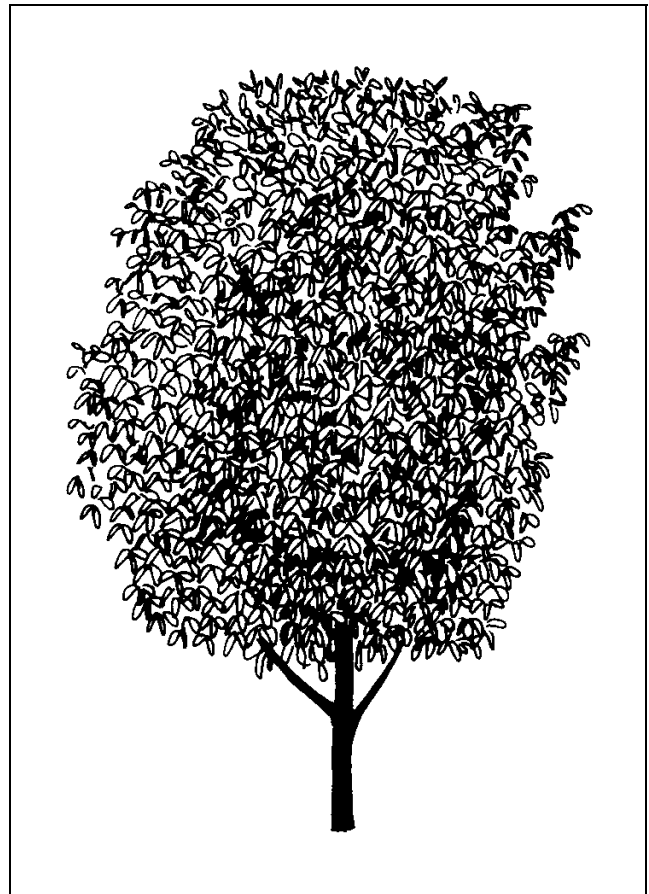


Figure 1. Middle-aged Ochrosia.

Crown shape: oval; upright

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite; whorled (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire; undulate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong; 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: fall flowering; pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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: green

Current year twig thickness: thick



Figure 3. Foliage of Ochrosia.

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: No entries found.

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Salt-tolerant *Ochrosia* grows well close to the ocean in full sun or partial shade on a wide range of soils, including alkaline, and responds well to fertilizing. It is very drought-tolerant but responds well to irrigation and fertilizer. Its dark green, dense foliage makes it ideal for tall screens or at the rear of a shrub border.

Propagation is by scarified seed or cuttings.

Pests

Pest problems include scale and occasionally mites. These can be locally troublesome.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.