



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Licania michauxii*¹

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Introduction

Gopher-Apple is an upright, evergreen plant that attains a height of 3 to 12 inches. This Florida native has stout, underground stems from which arise slender aerial shoots. The stiff leaves are a lustrous green color and have an oblong-spatulate shape. The underside of these leaves are glabrous or felty-pubescent, and the leaf margins are shallowly undulate to entire. Inconspicuous, green flowers appear on this plant in the summer and are followed by ellipsoid drupes that are .5 to 1 inch long. Gopher-Apple has a very high salt spray tolerance and is ideal for coastal landscapes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Licania michauxii*
Pronunciation: lye-KAY-nee-uh miss-SHOW-ee-eye
Common name(s): Gopher-Apple, Ground-Oak
Family: *Chrysobalanaceae*
Plant type: shrub; ground cover
USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 1)
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: ground cover
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: 0 to 1 feet

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: spatulate

Leaf venation: reticulate

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: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-341, 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 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

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: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Gopher-Apple can be used as a ground cover along the coast. It tolerates a wide range of soil pH in any well-drained soil.

Gopher-Apple will grow well in full sun on well-drained, sandy soils. It is quite drought tolerant but may not transplant well. Plants should establish well from containers.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.