



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Schefflera arboricola*<sup>1</sup>

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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

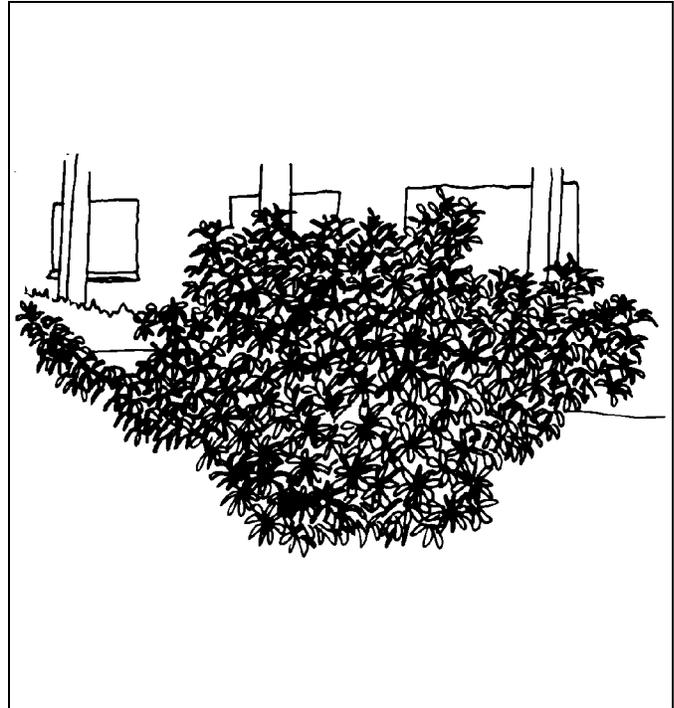


Figure 1. Dwarf Schefflera.

**Plant habit:** vase shape

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-541, 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 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.

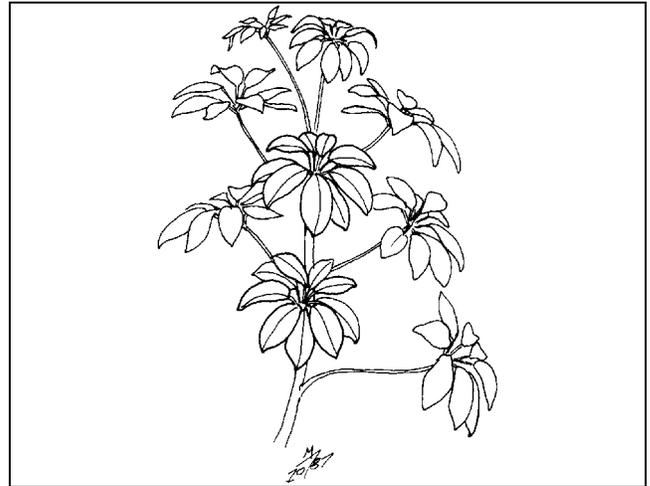
There is a cultivar available with variegated foliage.

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