



Chrysophyllum oliviforme Satinleaf¹

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INTRODUCTION

Reaching a height of 40 feet and a spread of 20 feet in an oval form, Satinleaf is a medium-sized tree noted for its unusually beautiful foliage (Fig. 1). The evergreen, four-inch-long leaves are a glossy, dark green above and a glowing, bright copper color beneath, providing a beautiful, two-toned effect when breezes cause the leaves to flutter. Leaves in some respects resemble those of the brown-back Southern Magnolias. This Florida native makes an attractive freestanding lawn specimen or blends well in a shrubby border or naturalized landscape. It could be tried as a street tree or parking lot tree. Use it cautiously since it can be severely damaged at 32-degrees F. and below. The trunks are rather showy because they are covered with thin, light reddish-brown, scaly bark. Small, inconspicuous flowers are followed by small, sweet, purple fruits.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Chrysophyllum oliviforme*

Pronunciation: kriss-so-FILL-um
awl-liv-ih-FOR-mee

Common name(s): Satinleaf

Family: *Sapotaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); near a deck or patio; screen; shade tree; specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree

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

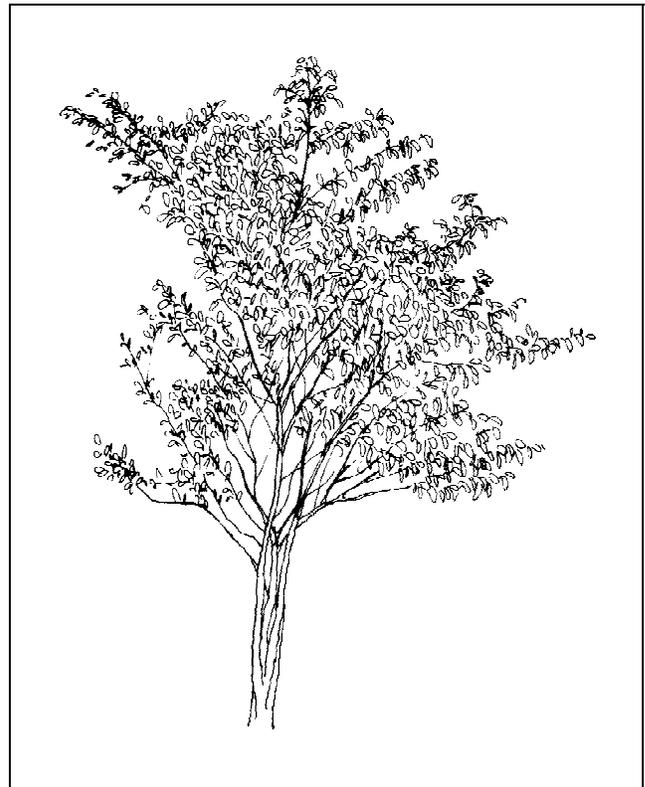


Figure 1. Young Satinleaf.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 45 feet

Spread: 18 to 25 feet

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

Crown shape: oval

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: 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: white

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; year round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: purple

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

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; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

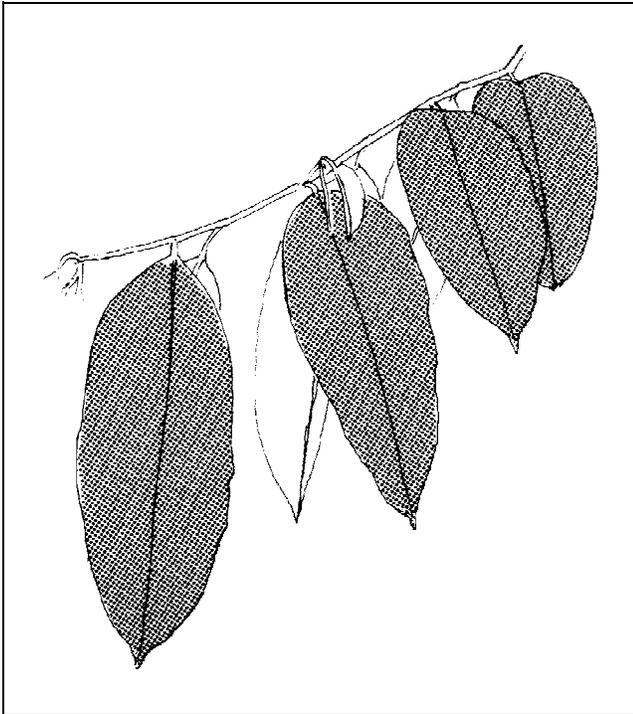


Figure 3. Foliage of Satinleaf.

Culture

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

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic;
occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental
features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Satinleaf should be grown in full sun or partial shade on fertile, well-drained soils. Plants should be mulched and watered faithfully, although they are able to withstand occasional drought. The tree has not been widely planted but should make a good, durable urban tree in USDA hardiness zones 10b and 11. Trunk and branch structure is good, making this a clean, long-lasting tree.

Star-apple, *Chrysophyllum cainito*, closely related, bears leaves of similar decorative quality and is grown for its larger (up to four inches long), more edible fruits.

Propagation is by seed, or semi-hardwood cuttings under mist.

Pests and Diseases

Caterpillars will occasionally chew the leaves, gall mite can deform leaves, and leaf notcher chews leaves.