

Ligustrum lucidum 'Tricolor' 'Tricolor' Glossy Privet¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This fast-growing evergreen tree, 25 to 35 feet in height (can grow larger) with a 25 to 35-foot spread, has a dense canopy of bending branches composed of large, four to six-inch-long, glossy green leaves with white edges (Fig. 1). Young leaves emerge pink. Terminal, 6 to 10-inch-long, eye-catching panicles of small, white, malodorous flowers are produced in late spring in the south and summer in the north. These blooms are followed in fall by large, showy clusters of small purple berries. The berries are popular with birds and the dispersed seeds germinate in the landscape and could become somewhat of a nuisance. Care must be taken in the location of this multitrunked tree since the profuse berry production can create a litter problem on hard surfaces. The fallen berries may stain car paint, walks, and patios.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ligustrum lucidum* 'Tricolor'

Pronunciation: lih-GUS-trum LOO-sih-dum

Common name(s): 'Tricolor' Glossy Privet, 'Tricolor' Tree Ligustrum

Family: *Oleaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); 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; screen; trainable as a standard; shade tree; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide);

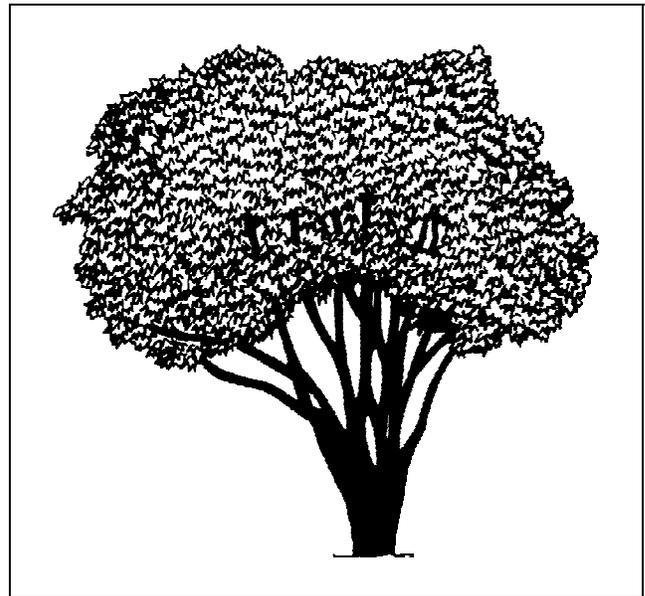


Figure 1. Mature 'Tricolor' Glossy Privet.

specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 35 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

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

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: dense

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate; ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: showy; summer flowering; unpleasant fragrance

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: blue; purple

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

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; 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: green; gray

Current year twig thickness: medium

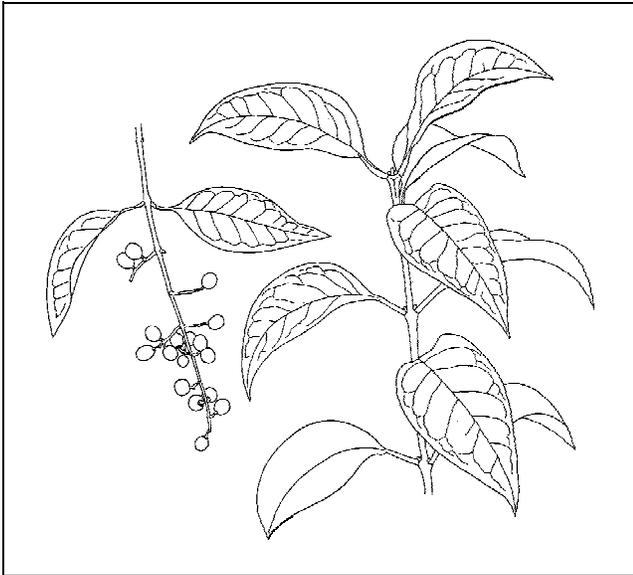


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Tricolor' Glossy Privet.

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: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: No entries found.

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

When growing on to a tree sized plant, be sure not to purchase those which were trained as a standard. These often have all branches originating from the same spot on the trunk, and are not well formed for longevity in the landscape. Trees trained as standards are high-maintenance plants since they should be kept in this form and size for their entire life. Most nurseries grow Tree Ligustrum with several trunks originating close to the ground. They spread out from each other as they ascend into the rounded, vase-shaped canopy. These can be planted as street trees if

lower branches are periodically removed when the tree is young.

Showing quick growth while young but slowing with age, Tree Ligustrum will grow in full sun or partial shade on various soil types, and is moderately salt-tolerant. The tree seems to thrive on neglect and are used along highways (unirrigated) as a screen for headlights. Clay soil and high pH do not seem to cause any problems as long as water drains away from the roots. Plant it as a street tree along boulevards where regular mowing will kill germinating seedlings and in locations where overhead space is limited. Mature specimens will require only light pruning to maintain shape and remove dead wood.

Many other cultivars are available: 'Compactum' has dense leaves of dark, waxy green; 'Davison Hardy' is exceptionally hardy (to minus-10-degrees F.) and has excellent foliage, becoming available in the trade; 'Gracile' has closely-spaced erect branches; 'Macrophyllum' has large leaves while 'Microphyllum' has small leaves; 'Nigrifolium' has very dark green leaves; 'Nobile' has branches which are strongly ascending and fastigate; 'Pyramidale' is narrowly conical in form; 'Recurvifolium' has recurved leaf margins; 'Repandum' has narrow leaves with waxy edges.

Propagation is by grafting. Plants are often grafted onto *Ligustrum quihoui* since Tree Ligustrum is resistant to propagation by cuttings. The abundant seedlings found under old trees can be transplanted and used as they are or as grafting stock.

Pests

Scales, white-flies, sooty-mold, and nematodes are problems but not serious.

Diseases

Root rot in wet soil.