



Schefflera actinophylla **Schefflera¹**

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INTRODUCTION

The large, palmately compound, shiny leaves sit atop the multiple, thin, bare trunks of Schefflera, creating much the impression of an exotic, 25-foot-tall plant-umbrella (Fig. 1). Schefflera lends a tropical effect to any landscape use, from patio containers to interiorscapes to protected outdoor locations. Capable of reaching 40 feet in height, Schefflera will grow rapidly to create a dense windbreak or screen for property lines. When grown in full sun, trees will produce flowers during the summer, an unusual arrangement of small blooms on three-foot-diameter, stiff terminal clusters. These clusters are held above the foliage and are arranged like the ribs of an inverted umbrella, or like the tentacles of an octopus. The red blooms are followed by reddish-purple, half-inch fruits.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Schefflera actinophylla*

Pronunciation: shef-LEER-uh ack-tin-oh-FILL-uh

Common name(s): Schefflera, Queensland

Umbrella-Tree

Family: Araliaceae

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: suitable for growing indoors; not recommended for planting

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

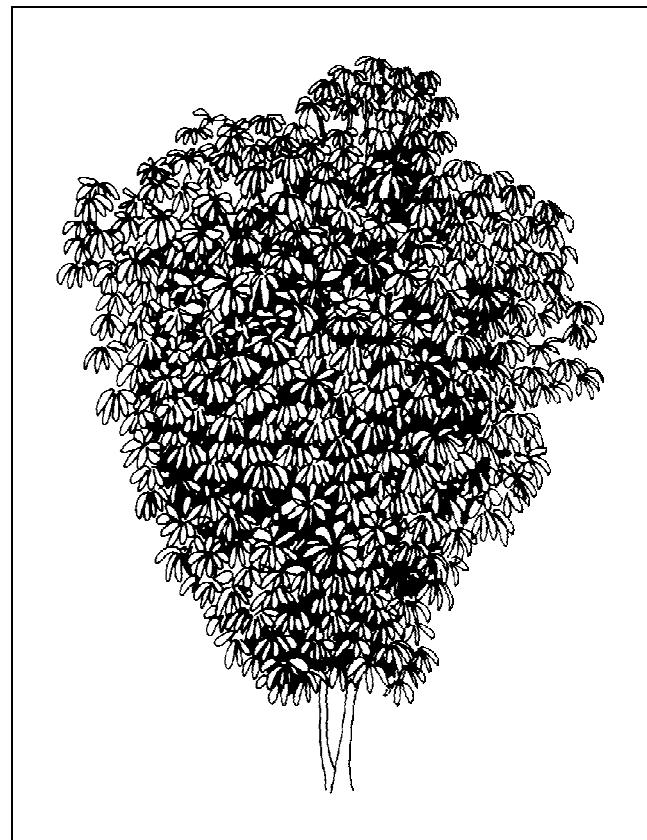


Figure 1. Middle-aged Schefflera.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: upright

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaflet margin: entire; undulate

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaflet blade length: 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristics: showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: purple; red

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

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: stout; thick

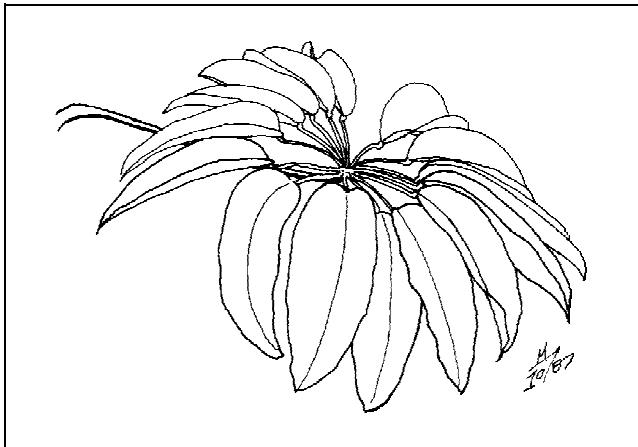


Figure 3. Foliage of Schefflera.

Culture

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

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Soil salt tolerance: poor

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

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

Schefflera will grow in full sun or partial shade on a wide variety of well-drained soils but require full sun to flower. Trees will display their best growth on rich, moist soil in a full sun location. There is significant leaf drop on this easily-grown tree creating quite a racking job, but plants will require very little pruning if given enough overhead space to develop. Trees may be topped as desired to create multi-level masses of foliage. This may be desirable since the lower portions of the trunks lose all their foliage over time. Sometimes the tree is used as a house plant, but it is too often misused by planting it too close to a building.

It has naturalized in some parts of south Florida and has been placed on a list of exotic pest plants.

Propagation is by seeds, cuttings, or layers.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern. Scales and sooty mold are a minor problem. Trees used indoors are susceptible to infestations of spider mites.