



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Canella winterana*¹

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Introduction

Wild Cinnamon is a salt tolerant large evergreen shrub or small tree native of Florida and tropical America. Purple and white showy flowers cover the tree in summer and fall followed by bright red berries clustered near the tips of branches. Thick, obovate to spatulate shaped leaves fill the dense canopy with a medium- to olive-green color. The trunk grows straight up the center of the canopy and develops thin branches that grow to no more than about 4 feet long.

General Information

Scientific name: *Canella winterana*

Pronunciation: kuh-NEL-luh win-tur-AY-nuh

Common name(s): Winter Cinnamon, Wild Cinnamon

Family: *Canellaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

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: hedge; espalier; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

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

Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 6 to 8 feet

Plant habit: columnar

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: obovate

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: 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 characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: no thorns
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: alkaline; sand; loam; acidic
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Wild Cinnamon can be used as a specimen planted alone in the landscape as a small tree. They can be trained with several stems reaching up into the canopy, or left to grow with one trunk as seen in the wild. The rich, dense foliage creates a cooling shade beneath the tree and makes this a good native plant for locating near patios and decks for large and small residences alike. Plant them in a row spaced 10 feet apart along an entrance to a subdivision, mall or commercial landscape for a dramatic impact. The narrow canopy makes it a good candidate for a clipped or unclipped screen along a property line. A number of nurseries offer this wonderful plant for sale.

Best growth and flowering occur in the full sun on a relatively well-drained site. The tree tolerates alkaline soils well. It is an endangered plant in Florida.

Pests and Diseases

No serious pests or diseases bother this plant.