



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Casasia clusiifolia*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This evergreen shrub or small tree is one of Florida's most exceptional native, salt-tolerant plants (Fig. 1). It grows up to the first dune near the ocean. The beautiful, glossy, leathery foliage is clustered near the branch tips. The Seven Year Apple has axillary clusters of white, pink-tipped flowers that emerge in the spring and early summer. These flowers are approximately 1-inch long and have a very sweet, heavy fragrance. Seven-Year Apple has large lemon-shaped fruits that may persist for more than a year. The fruits are green when they first appear and gradually turn yellow and ripen in about one year. Yellow fruits then turn black and become wrinkled. The dark brown pulp inside the black fruits is edible but is filled with many seeds. This pulp is very appealing to the Mockingbirds, and they hollow out the ripe fruits and leave the empty skins hanging on the plant.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Casasia clusiifolia*

**Pronunciation:** kuh-SAW-see-uh kloo-see-if-FOLE-ee-uh

**Common name(s):** Seven-Year Apple

**Family:** *Rubaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

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

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** hedge; screen; border; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot

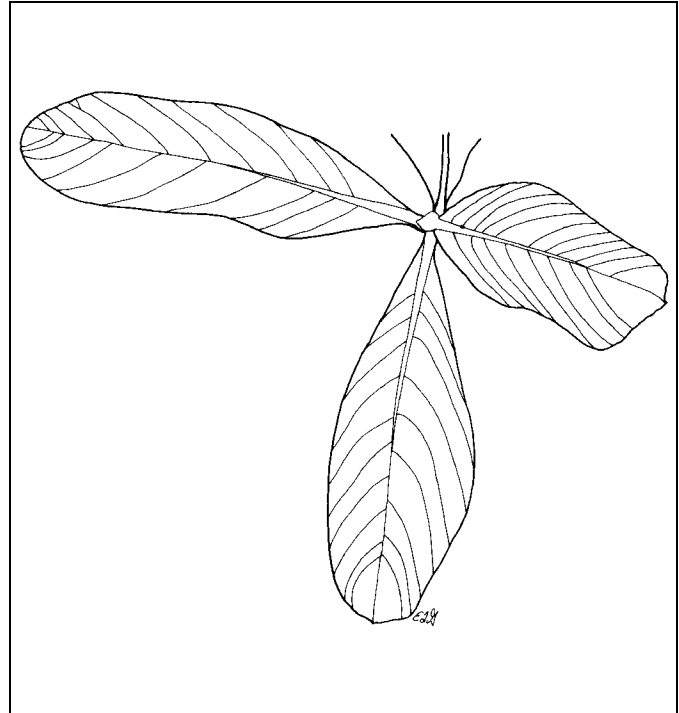


Figure 1. Seven-Year Apple.

islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

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

### Description

**Height:** 8 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 8 to 15 feet

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-110, 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.

**Plant habit:** round  
**Plant density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** revolute  
**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**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:** showy; spring flowering; summer flowering; flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit cover:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** black  
**Fruit characteristic:** suited for human consumption; attracts birds

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

**Culture**

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

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**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

The Seven-Year Apple may be used in the same way that Photinia or Pittosporum is used in the landscape. Plant them on 4 to 5 foot centers to create a hedge or screen of medium-textured soft foliage. Locate them to soften the corner of a commercial building. They are too big for many residential landscapes unless they are regularly pruned. Form a small, multi-trunk tree by removing lower branches as the plant grows. Plant them as a wind break on the ocean front.

A full sun or partial shade location in the landscape will be ideal for the Seven-Year Apple. It requires well-drained soils and is very drought and salt tolerant.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.