**Coffea arabica**

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**Introduction**

This medium-textured, dense, upright shrub has glossy, wavy-edged, unusually dark green leaves, fragrant, white, starry-shaped springtime flowers, and showy, fleshy, red berries (Fig. 1). Each berry contains two seeds or coffee beans suitable for home roasting and grinding.

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**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Coffea arabica
- **Pronunciation:** KOFF-ee-uh uh-RAB-bick-uh
- **Common name(s):** Coffee
- **Family:** Rubiaceae
- **Plant type:** shrub
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:** fruit; specimen; container or above-ground planter; hedge; near a deck or patio; espalier; border
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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**Description**

- **Height:** 10 to 15 feet
- **Spread:** 8 to 15 feet
- **Plant habit:** round
- **Plant density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** medium

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**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** whorled
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** ovate
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

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Figure 1. Coffee.

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1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-135, 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.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.
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: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant; suited for human consumption

Trunk and Branches

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

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
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: long-term health usually not affected by pests
Use and Management

Reaching a height of 15 feet, Coffee tree is a great conversation piece, growing in light rich soil and partial shade. Regular pruning can keep the plant attractive at any desirable size. This handsome shrub is suitable for containers, specimen plantings, or used as a small understory tree in hammocks and wild wooded areas. It also makes a nice backdrop in a shrub border. It has the potential to escape from cultivation.

Propagation is by seed.

Coffee plants are bothered by scales, mites, thrips, caterpillars, and mineral deficiencies.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

Figure 3. Fruit of Coffee