



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Coffea arabica*<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### 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.

### 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

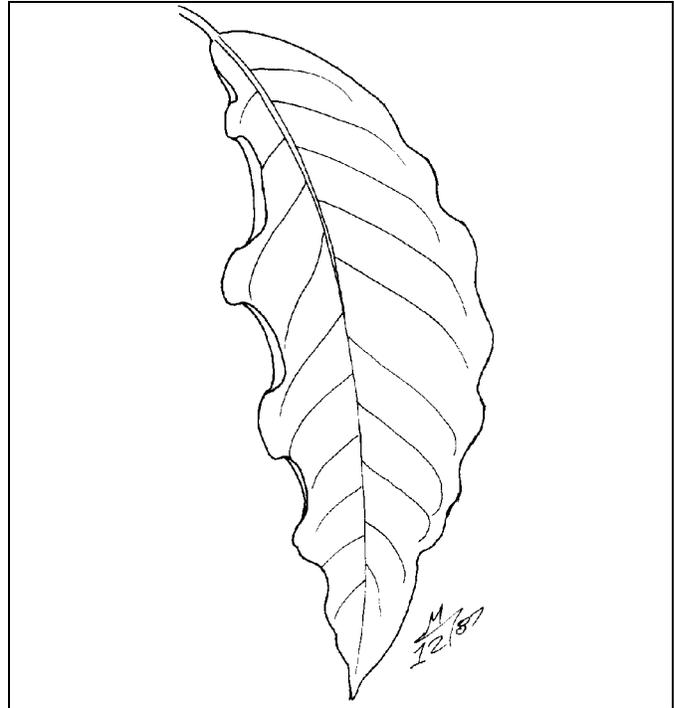


Figure 1. Coffee.

### Description

**Height:** 10 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 8 to 15 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

### 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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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**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

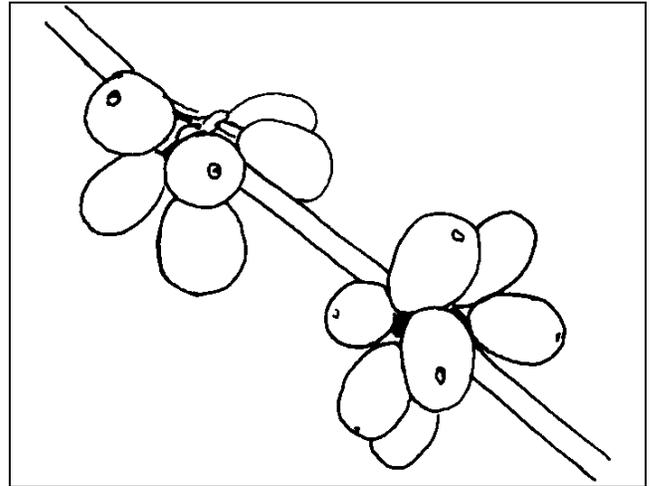
Reaching a height of 15 feet, Coffee tree is a great conversation piece, growing in light rich soil and partial shade. Regular pruning can keep the plant attractive at any desirable size. This handsome shrub is suitable for containers, specimen plantings, or used as a small understory tree in hammocks 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