



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Scaevola plumieri*¹

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Introduction

Inkberry is a 2- to 3-foot-tall shrub with succulent stems that spread to form dense clumps (Fig. 1). Stems root as they touch the ground. The foliage is clustered toward the tips of the branches and is thick, fleshy, and a glossy, medium green color. The flowers are 3/4 to 1 inch in length, five to six lobed, and found in small clusters among the foliage. They are barely noticeable. The lobes of the flowers are split vertically and spread out like a fan to suggest a half flower instead of a whole flower. The fruits are black, glossy, smooth and fairly prominent among the foliage. They are bitter to the taste but are harmless if only one is eaten.

General Information

Scientific name: *Scaevola plumieri*

Pronunciation: see-VOLE-luh PLOO-meer-rye

Common name(s): Inkberry

Family: *Goodeniaceae*

Plant type: ground cover

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: border; mass planting; foundation; reclamation plant; 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); ground cover; cascading down a wall

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

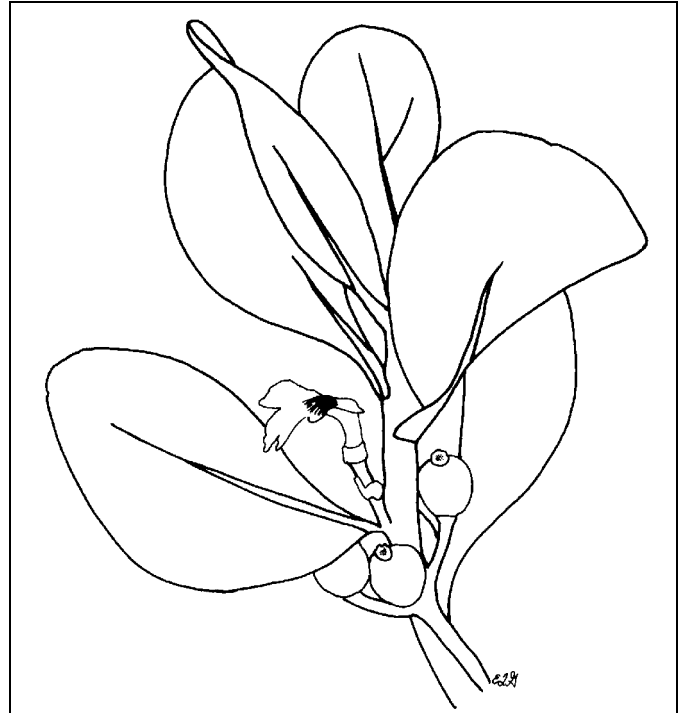


Figure 1. Inkberry.

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 3 to 8 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** spiral
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** spatulate
- Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white
- Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches
- Fruit cover:** fleshy
- Fruit color:** white

Fruit characteristic: showy

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:** thick

Culture

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

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

Inkberry can be used as a seaside ornamental, specimen or ground cover. They grow nearly to the high tide mark on the ocean side of the dunes among the Sea Oats and other highly salt tolerant plants. They are most effective when massed together as a low ground cover or low shrub. They catch sand and help stabilize the dunes.

Inkberry is not harmed by salt spray and is found on sand dunes in southern Florida and the Florida Keys. It is drought tolerant and requires full sun. Plantings inland should be located in a well-drained landscape setting.

Seeds and the sprawling stems that have rooted naturally may be used for propagation.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.