



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Severinia buxifolia*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This dense, low-branching, compact evergreen shrub has small, oval, glossy, dark green leaves closely spaced on slender, thorny branches (Fig. 1). Small, white, fragrant, orange-like blossoms in spring and summer are followed by shining black, seedy berries. Growth rate is very slow.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Severinia buxifolia*

**Pronunciation:** sev-ver-RIN-nee-uh buck-siff-FOLE-lee-uh

**Common name(s):** Boxthorn

**Family:** *Rutaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 10 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

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

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** mass planting; foundation; superior hedge

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

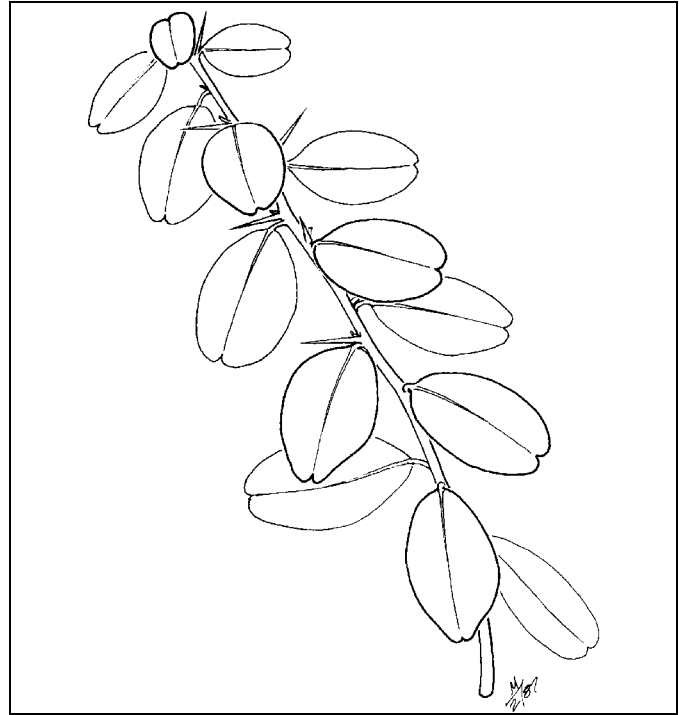


Figure 1. Boxthorn.

### Description

**Height:** 5 to 12 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 6 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; pleasant fragrance

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** black

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## **Use and Management**

Boxthorn works well as a sheared hedge, barrier, or foundation shrub. Only one pruning is needed each year once the plant has reached the desired height. Tolerant of most well-drained soils, Boxthorn needs regular watering until established. Although Boxthorn will grow in shade, it has more compact, dense growth in full sun. The plant is not widely available, perhaps due to its slow growth rate.

The cultivars 'Compacta' and 'Nana' have dwarf growth habits.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pest problems include scales, white-flies, sooty-mold, thrips, mites, and soil nematodes.

### **Pests and Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.