



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Taxus floridana¹

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Introduction

This lovely Florida native is an evergreen shrub or small tree, slowly reaching a height of 20 feet (Fig. 1). The horizontally-held, spreading branches are clothed with short, dark green needles which look pointed but are actually very soft to the touch. New growth is bright green making a nice contrast to the darker, mature foliage. Insignificant flowers are produced in March on female plants and are followed by single-seeded, small, pulpy fruits, ripening to red in the fall. Both leaves and fruit of Florida Yew are poisonous.

General Information

Scientific name: *Taxus floridana*

Pronunciation: TACK-suss flor-rid-DAY-nuh

Common name(s): Florida Yew

Family: *Taxaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: near a deck or patio; screen; attracts butterflies; superior hedge

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: 10 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

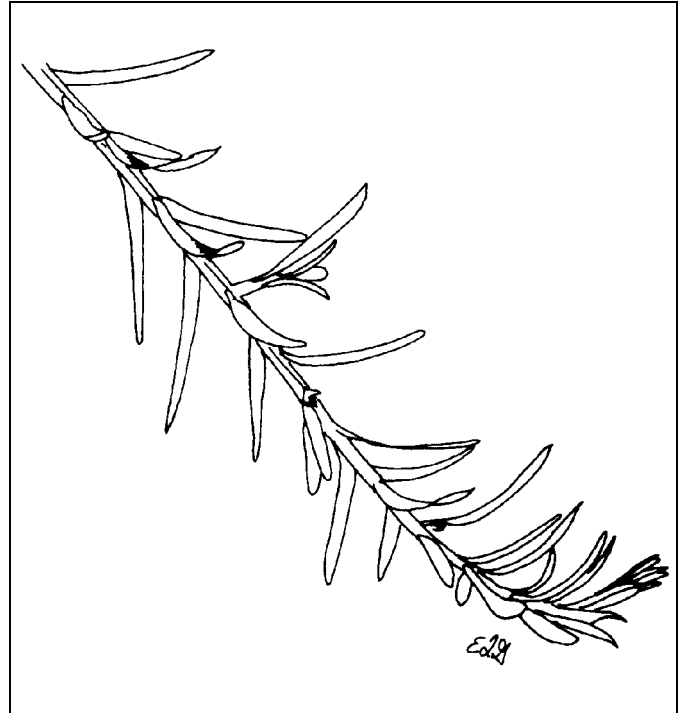


Figure 1. Florida Yew.

Plant habit: oval; vase shape

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
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: no flowers
Flower characteristic: no flowers

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristic: attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: 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: sand; acidic; loam; clay;
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

The dense, compact growth of Florida Yew makes it ideal for use as a specimen, hedge, or foundation planting but Florida Yew is seldom seen in nurseries and should be used much more often in home landscapes in order to save it from extinction. In the wild, Florida Yew is found only in a small section of North Florida on the eastern shore of the Apalachicola River where it will ultimately be threatened by encroaching developments.

Florida Yew should be grown in conditions which can mimic its native habitat as much as possible, broken shade on rich, slightly acid, well-drained soil. Plants should be watered faithfully.

Propagation is by cuttings. Mature wood cuttings taken in winter root well under mist.

Scales.

Pests and Diseases

Mushroom root-rot.