



Amphitecna latifolia Black-Calabash¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This upright, densely-foliated, evergreen small tree can reach a height of 30 feet with a variable spread (Fig. 1). The large, seven-inch-long, dark green, glossy leaves makes it ideal for a small-scale shade or specimen tree, or it can be allowed to grow into a tall screen. Throughout the year, two-inch-long, purplish-white, non-showy tubular flowers are produced on short stalks. These blooms are followed by smooth, shiny green, four-inch-long fruits which have a thin, hard shell and contain numerous 1/2-inch-long, edible black seeds in white pulp. The furrowed tree bark is grey and rough.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Amphitecna latifolia*

Pronunciation: am-fih-TECK-nuh lat-ih-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): Black-Calabash

Family: *Bignoniaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen

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

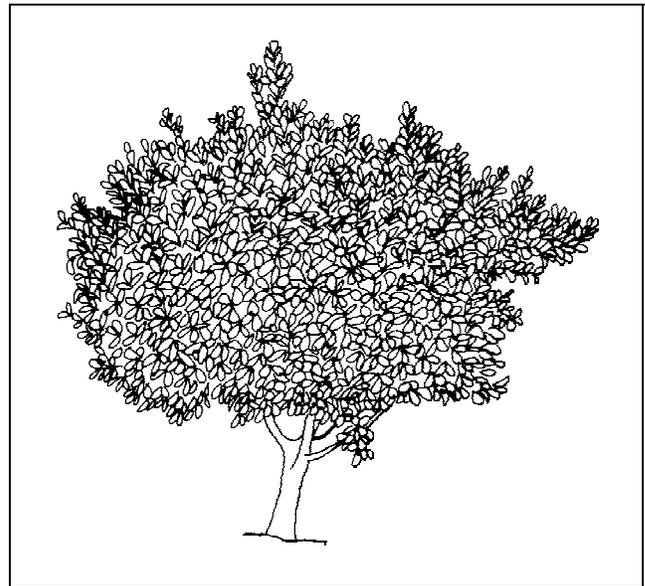


Figure 1. Middle-aged Black-Calabash.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 30 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: oval; upright

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: banchidodrome; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; year round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break
Current year twig color: gray
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerance: moderate

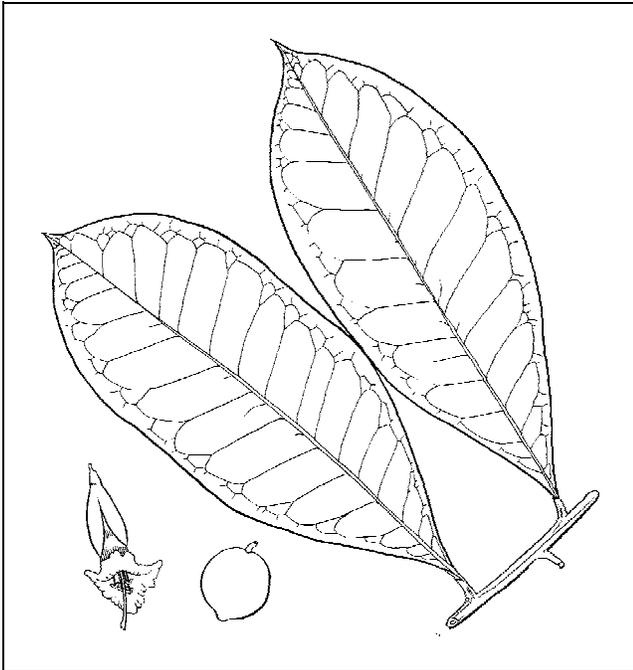


Figure 3. Foliage of Black-Calabash.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing in full sun or partial shade on a wide range of soils, Black Calabash has only marginal salt-tolerance and is very susceptible to wind damage. Top-heavy trees are known to blow over in high winds. Be sure to untangle circling or kinked roots before planting to help prevent this from occurring. Proper branch thinning can also help prevent this from occurring.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or air-layerings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.