



Osmanthus x fortunei 'Variegatus' 'Variegatus' Fortunes Osmanthus¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This large, vigorous, evergreen shrub or small tree grows 15 to 20 feet tall and forms a dense, round or oval silhouette (Fig. 1). Very old specimens form a spreading vase. A hybrid of Holly Osmanthus (*Osmanthus heterophyllus*) and Fragrant Tea Olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*), Fortune's Osmanthus has the spiny, holly-like, dark green, white margined, leathery foliage of one parent plant and the extremely fragrant white flowers of the other. Frequently trimmed into a hedge or screen, Fortune's Osmanthus could be used more as a specimen or container planting, and the barbed leaves also make it suitable as a barrier planting. 'Variegatus' has a nice appearance for a variegated plant.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Osmanthus x fortunei* 'Variegatus'
Pronunciation: oz-MANTH-us x for-TOO-nee-eye
Common name(s): 'Variegatus' Fortunes Osmanthus
Family: *Oleaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; screen; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

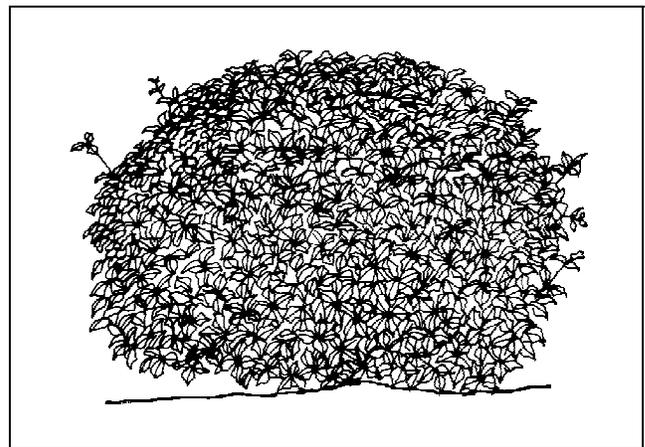


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Variegatus' Fortunes Osmanthus.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet
Spread: 6 to 10 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: oval
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: pectinate; serrate; spiny
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-427, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: fall flowering; pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; rare

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

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; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

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

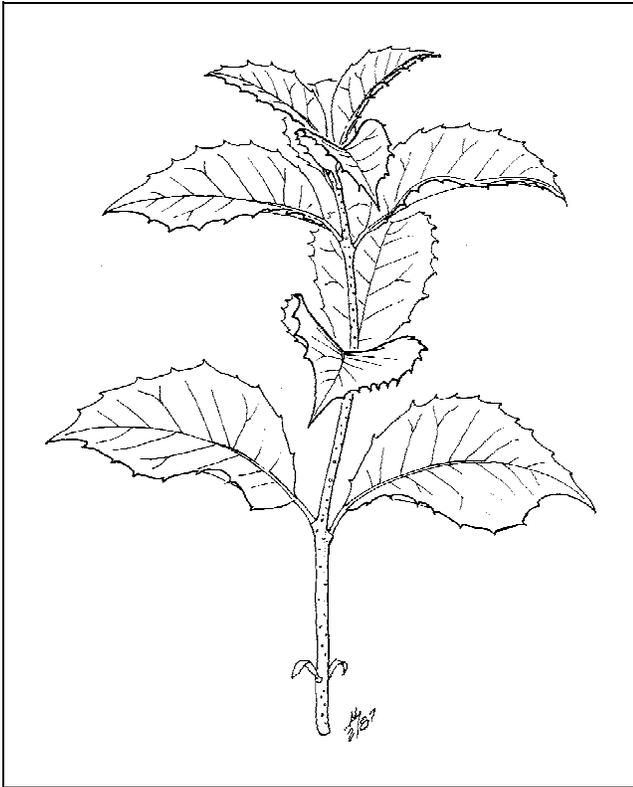


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Variegatus' Fortunes Osmanthus.

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Fortune's Osmanthus should be grown in full sun or partial shade on any well-drained soil, including clay. Drought tolerance is good with established specimens apparently doing fine without irrigation.

The cultivar 'San Jose' has cream to orange flowers.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

Scales are one of the few problems. They can cause some defoliation if infestation is serious.

Diseases

Mushroom root rot when grown on wet soils is a disease that may infect this tree.