



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Sophora tomentosa*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Necklace-Pod is a dense, multi-trunked, 6- to 10-foot-tall shrub that is beautiful in many aspects (Fig. 1). The evergreen foliage of this plant is a wonderful silvery green color. The odd-pinnately compound leaves consist of 11 to 21 leaflets that are oval in shape. The leaflets, rachis, petiole and young branch tips are covered with a silvery, velvety pubescence that gives the plant its silvery cast. Bright yellow flowers appear in terminal spikes that are 4- to 16-inches-long; they occur periodically throughout the year. These showy flowers open from the base to the elongating tip of the flower spike. Attractive brown seedpods are borne on the plant after flowering ceases, but they can frequently be found on the plant together. These pods are 2 to 8 inches long and are so compressed between the seeds that they look like necklace beads. BE CAREFUL! The seeds are dangerous to eat and contain an alkaloid, cytisine, which is emetic and purgative.

General Information

Scientific name: *Sophora tomentosa*

Pronunciation: soe-FOR-ruh toe-men-TOE-suh

Common name(s): Necklace-Pod, Silver-Bush

Family: *Leguminosae*

Plant type: tree

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: specimen; mass planting; border; accent; attracts butterflies

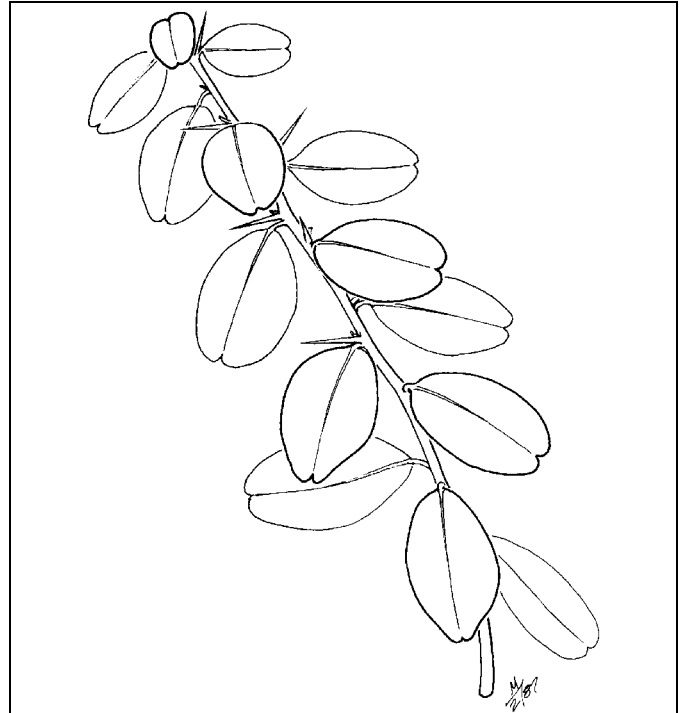


Figure 1. Necklace-Pod.

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

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 8 to 12 feet

Plant habit: vase shape; round

Plant density: moderate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-552, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

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: yellow

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

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

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

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: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

The Necklace-Pod is quite suited to coastal locations but may be grown inland as well. This shrub may be used for its foliage color and inflorescence, and it is excellent when utilized as a specimen plant or in a mass planting. This plant's flowers also attract many species of butterflies. Older specimens can be pruned into small trees.

Plant Necklace-Pod in full sun on a well-drained sandy soil. This plant is moderately drought tolerant and has low fertilizer requirements. It will tolerate high levels of salt spray and is at home on the inland side of the dunes along the beach.

Sophora tomentosa can be grown from seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

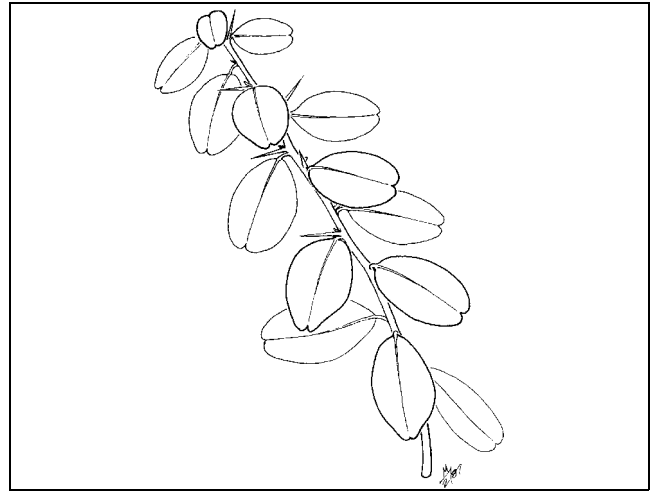


Figure 3. Foliage of Necklace-Pod