



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Zanthoxylum fagara*¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

Wild-Lime is a small tree native to south Florida and the Caribbean Basin (Fig. 1). It grows as an understory tree in the coastal upland plant communities on the lee side of the dunes in south Florida. Compound leaves have distinct wings along the leaf rachis and smell of lime when crushed. Most specimens in the woods have several stems emerging close to the ground. Specimens at nurseries can be grown with one or several trunks. Stems have sharp spines that can cause severe pain when they contact flesh.

General Information

Scientific name: *Zanthoxylum fagara*

Pronunciation: zan-THOCK-sill-lum fuh-GAR-ruh

Common name(s): Wild-Lime

Family: *Rutaceae*

Plant type: tree

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: reclamation plant; specimen; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; border; attracts butterflies

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

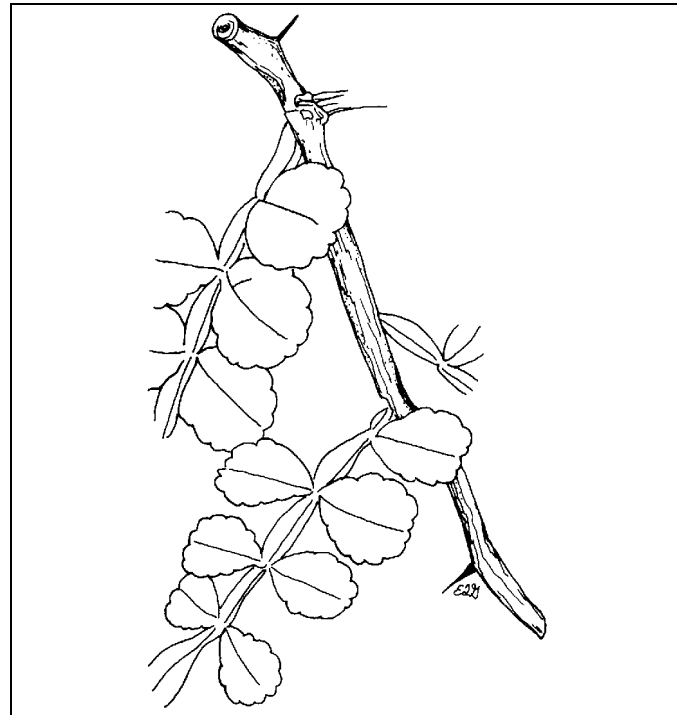


Figure 1. Wild-Lime.

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-619, 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.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: crenate

Leaf shape: obovate

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: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: thorns present; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part 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: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Although tolerance to shade allows Wild- Lime to germinate and grow successfully as an understory tree, it adapts well to the full sun. Plants grown in the full sun are full, nearly symmetrical and make a nice multi-trunked small patio tree. They can also be planted in a container or other area with limited soil space due to the small size of the mature plant.

Pests and Diseases

There are no serious pests or diseases that limit growth of this native tree.