



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Zanthoxylum fagara*¹

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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

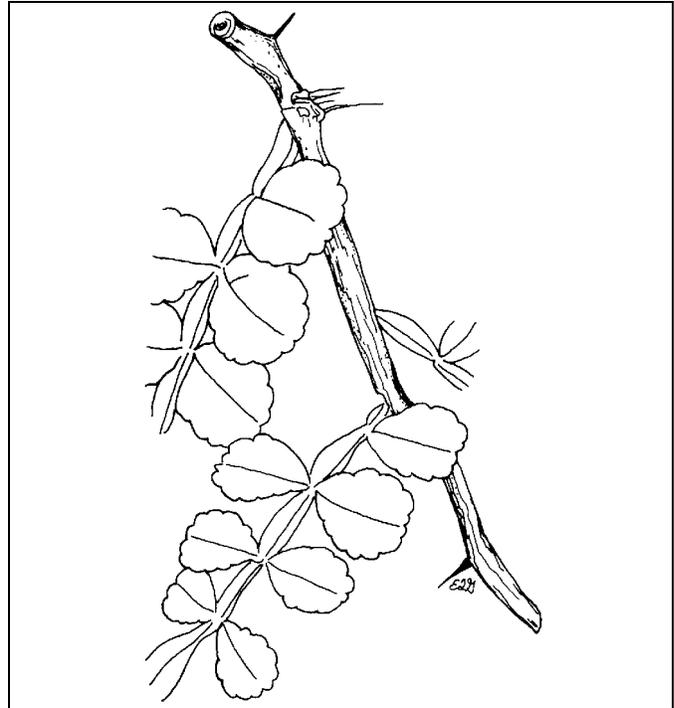


Figure 1. Wild-Lime.

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>.
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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.