

Casasia clusiifolia Seven Year Apple¹

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Introduction

This evergreen shrub or small tree is one of Florida's most exceptional native, salt-tolerant plants (Fig. 1). It grows up to the first dune near the ocean. The beautiful, glossy, leathery foliage is clustered near the branch tips. The seven year apple has axillary clusters of white, pink-tipped flowers that emerge in the spring and early summer. These flowers are approximately 1-inch-long and have a very sweet, heavy fragrance. Seven year apple has large lemon-shaped fruits that may persist for more than a year. The fruits are green when they first appear and gradually turn yellow and ripen in about one year. Yellow fruits then turn black and become wrinkled. The dark brown pulp inside the black fruits is edible but is filled with many seeds. This pulp is very appealing to the mockingbirds, and they hollow out the ripe fruits and leave the empty skins hanging on the plant.

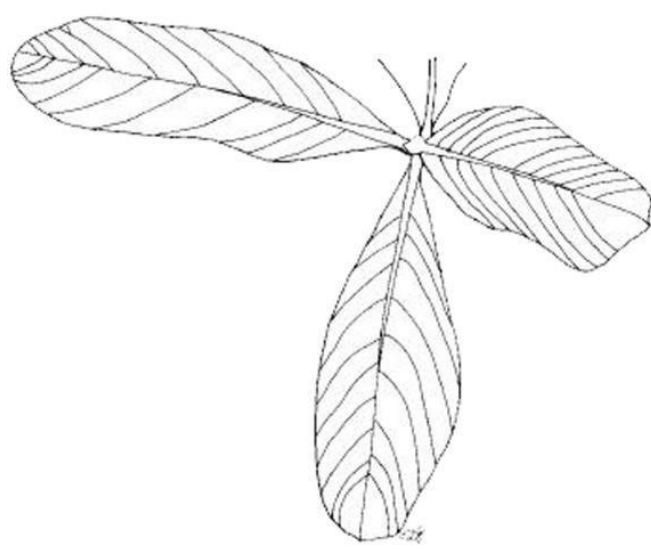


Figure 1. Seven year apple.

General Information

Casasia clusiifolia
kuh-SAW-see-uh kloo-see-if-FOLE-ee-uh
seven year apple
Rubaceae
shrub
10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

year round
native to Florida
hedge; screen; border; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

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

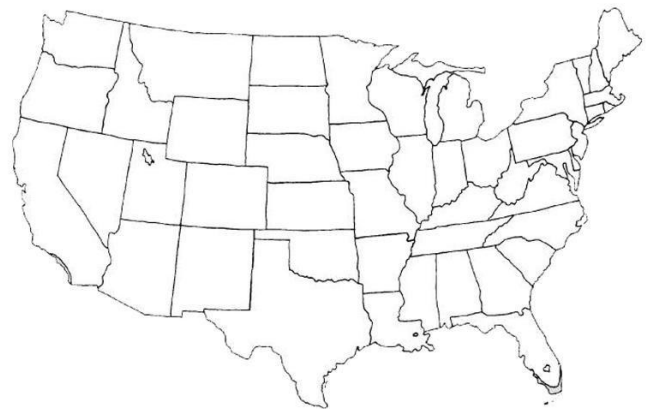


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

8 to 20 feet
8 to 15 feet
round
dense
slow
coarse

Foliage

alternate
simple
revolute
obovate
pinnate
evergreen
4 to 8 inches
green
no fall color change

not showy

Flower

white
showy; spring flowering; summer
flowering; flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

oval
1 to 3 inches
fleshy
black
suited for human consumption; attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy
green
thick

Culture

plant grows in part shade/part sun
acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay
high
unknown
36 to 60 inches

Other

usually not a problem

no special winter interest
plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
not known to be invasive
no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

The seven year apple may be used in the same way that photinia or pittosporum is used in the landscape. Plant them on 4 to 5 foot centers to create a hedge or screen of medium textured soft foliage. Locate them to soften the corner of a commercial building. They are too big for many residential landscapes unless they are regularly pruned. Form a small, multi-trunk tree by removing lower branches as the plant grows. Plant them as a wind break on the ocean front. A full sun or partial shade location in the landscape will be ideal for the seven year apple. It requires well-drained soils and is very drought and salt tolerant.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

¹ To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.

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