

Acacia auriculiformis: Earleaf Acacia¹

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Introduction

Quickly reaching a height of 40 feet and a spread of 25 feet, Earleaf Acacia becomes a loose, rounded, evergreen, open shade tree. It is often planted for its abundance of small, beautiful, bright yellow flowers and fast growth. The flattened, curved branchlets, which look like leaves, are joined by twisted, brown, ear-shaped seed pods. Growing 6 to 8 feet per year, Earleaf Acacia quickly grows into a medium-sized shade tree. This makes it a popular tree. However, it has brittle wood and weak branch crotches, and the tree can be badly damaged during wind storms. Prune branches so there is a wide angle of attachment to help them from splitting from the tree. Also be sure to keep the major branches pruned back so they stay less than half the diameter of the trunk. These techniques might increase the longevity of existing trees.

General Information

Scientific name: *Acacia auriculiformis*

Pronunciation: uh-KAY-shuh ah-rick-yoo-lih-FOR-miss

Common name(s): Earleaf Acacia

Family: Leguminosae

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

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (IFAS Invasive Plant Working Group 2008), *Acacia auriculiformis* should be treated with caution in the central and south zone in Florida, may be recommended but managed to prevent escape. It is not considered a problem species and may

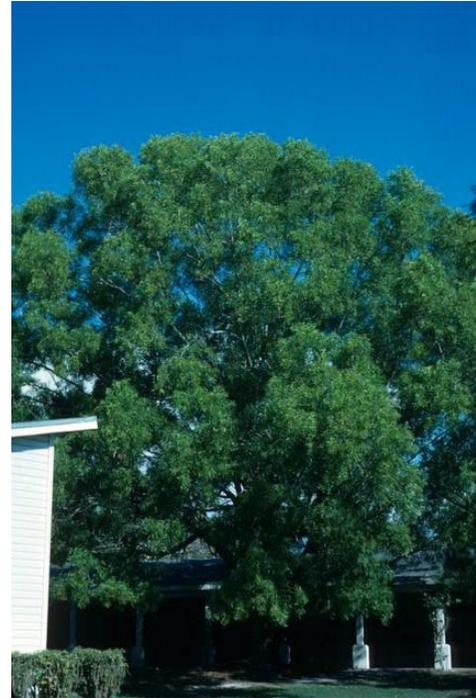


Figure 1. Mature *Acacia auriculiformis*: Earleaf Acacia. Credits: R.A. Howard. ©Smithsonian Institution. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, Richard A. Howard Photograph Collection. United States, HI, Oahu

be recommended in the north zone in Florida (counties listed by zone at: http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment/pdfs/assess_counties.pdf)

Uses: not recommended for planting

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

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Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 35 to 40 feet
Spread: 25 to 35 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular
Crown shape: round
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, broadleaf evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

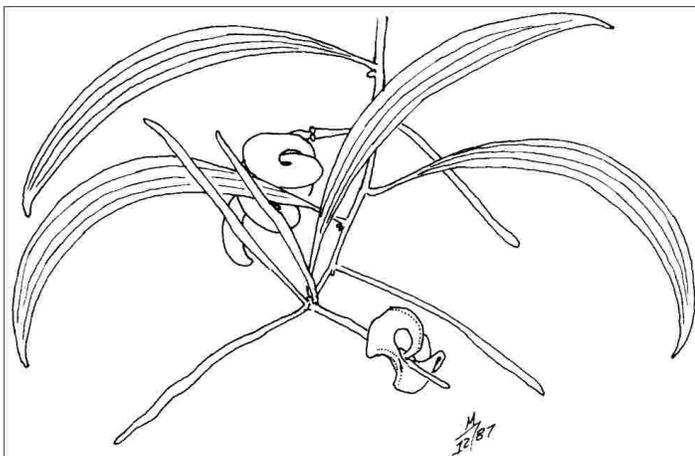


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem



Figure 4. Fruit, *Acacia auriculiformis* (Fabaceae). Credits: R.A. Howard. ©Smithsonian Institution. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, Richard A. Howard Photograph Collection. United States, HI, Oahu

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: thin
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: no
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Seeds also germinate in the landscape and it has escaped cultivation in south Florida where it is becoming a mildly invasive weed in some areas. However, it is not as invasive as Australian pine or Brazilian pepper and probably will not become so. For these reasons, many people consider this to be an undesirable tree.

Earleaf Acacia grows in full sun on almost any soil including alkaline and is moderately salt-tolerant. It will withstand periods of water inundation but is also very tolerant of drought.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Occasionally anthracnose infects leaves.

Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker (2008) IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas: Status Assessment. Cited from the Internet (November 16, 2012), http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment/pdfs/status_assessment.pdf