

Forestiera acuminata (A. Michaux) J. Poiret
(*Adelina acuminata*)

Swamp Privet

Other Common Names: Texas Forestiera.

Family: *Oleaceae*.

Cold Hardiness: With proper provenance selection, cold hardy from USDA zones 6 through 9(10).

Foliage: Deciduous; opposite to occasionally subopposite; simple; 2 to 3½(4½) long by ¾ to 1½ wide; tips acute to acuminate; sparse shallow toothing is sometimes present on distal portions of the blade; base acute to cuneate; occasional yellow to brown fall color.

Flower: Dioecious, occasionally polygamo-dioecious; staminate flowers in clusters subtended by yellow-green bracts; pistillate flowers in short ¾ to 1¼ long panicles; the axillary flowers occur in early spring; they are not showy, but sometimes noticeable when they precede the leaves.

Fruit: Purplish black drupes with a whitish bloom; ¾ to 1 long; ripening in autumn; eaten by wildlife.

Stem / Bark: Stems — on the slender side; flattened at the nodes; green then yellow brown and eventually a darker brown; mostly glabrous; Buds — ⅓ or less in length; egg-shaped; conical at the tip; imbricate; Bark — lightly ridged and furrowed with age; rough; dark brown.

Habit: Usually a medium to large irregularly rounded to upright deciduous shrub 6 to 10 tall, but *F. acuminata* can reach 30 in highly favorable sites.

Cultural Requirements: Full sun to partial shade; tolerant of moderately dry to wet sites; pH adaptable; durable and easily grown, benefitting from regular pruning.

Pathological Problems: None of consequence.

Ornamental Assets: Mildly interesting flowers in spring; tolerance to wet soils; disease-free, but relatively nondescript foliage.

Limitations & Liabilities: There is little to recommend this species ornamentally; this species may become weedy on favorable sites.

Landscape Utilization: Naturalizing; transition landscapes; perhaps as a substitute for *Ligustrum spp.* in hedge rows or sheared hedges in wet sites.

Other Comments: This is a nondescript species ornamentally, but it is important in native ecosystems; the genus name honors Charles Le Forestier, a French botanist and physician; the specific epithet refers to the acuminate leaf tips.

Native Habitat: Swamp Privet is a species with a scattered lowland distribution from Texas and Northeast Mexico to the southeastern Plains States, the southern Midwest, and Southeast USA.

Related Taxa: The genus *Forestiera* J. Poiret contains about fifteen species native to North America, Central America and the Caribbean; several of these species are native to Texas, where they are often found as a component of wild landscapes, but are seldom used extensively in cultivated landscapes.

Forestiera angustifolia J. Torrey
(*Forestiera puberula*, *Forestiera texana*)

Tanglewood

C Also known as Chaparral Blanco, Desert Olive, Elbowbush, Narrowleaf Forestiera, or Panalero; Tanglewood is a component of the South Texas brush country; this evergreen to semi-evergreen 3 to 6(8) tall irregular crown shrub holds limited landscape potential, but is an important plant in native landscapes; probably best reserved for naturalizing, erosion control, and use as wildlife habitat and food; the foliage is eaten by livestock and deer.

- C The cold tolerance of this species is not fully documented, but it is probably useful in USDA zones 8 through 10; perhaps it could be used as a sheared hedge for difficult sites, particularly those that are salty.

Forestiera pubescens T. Nuttall

Desert Olive

(*Forestiera acuminata* var. *parviflora*, *Forestiera neomexicana*, *Forestiera sphaerocarpa*)

- C Also known as Cruzilla, Elbowbush, New Mexican Privet, Spring Herald, or Stretch-Berry; this highly variable shrub can be found to be native to the Southwest, Southeast, and southern portions of the Inter-mountain West and Northern Mexico; its adaptability has led to its use as a general purpose shrub in a wide range of habitats, particularly in the desert Southwest and dry mountain regions where more ornamental options are limited; useful as a sheared hedge for difficult locations as a substitute for *Ligustrum chinense*; plants may be cold or drought deciduous; usually plants have an irregularly upright oval habit, 7Nto 10N(12N) tall with a spread two-thirds their height; plants can also be limbed up into small trees.
- C The useful range of this species is not fully defined, but with proper provenance selection should extend from a least USDA zones 4b through 9; a heat, drought, and salt tolerant species; avoid poorly drained soils; full sun to partial shade.
- C At least two distinct varieties have been separated based on the degree of pubescence on the foliage and inflorescences.

Forestiera segregata (N.J. von Jacquin) C.W.L. Krug & I. Urban **Florida Privet**

- C Florida Privet is an evergreen shrub 10Nto 15Ntall with a spread similar to two-thirds of the height; this fine textured small leaved shrub is sometimes planted in the Gulf Coast region as a general purpose sheared hedge or background screen.
- C Soil salt and drought tolerant; plants can withstand limited periods of poor drainage; full sun to partial shade; pH adaptable; useful in USDA zone 8b through 11.

References: Elias, 1980; Everitt and Drawe, 1993; Flint, 1997; Gilman and Black, 1999; Lynch, 1981; Mielke, 1993; Nixon, 1985; Powell, 1998; Richardson, 1995; Taylor et al., 1997; Tull and Miller, 1991; Vines, 1960.

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