



Calophyllum brasiliense Santa Maria¹

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INTRODUCTION

This upright, bushy, medium to coarse-textured evergreen tree is densely foliated with four-inch-long, leathery leaves (Fig. 1). Although able to reach 50 feet in height in the forest, Santa Maria tends to be a slow-growing, moderately-sized tree about 30 to 40 feet tall with a 40 to 50-foot spread. It is well-suited for planting beneath power lines 40 feet high. Small, white, fragrant flowers appear on one to two-inch-long racemes among the four to six-inch-long, glossy leaves. Well-suited as a street, parking lot, patio or small shade tree, especially for coastal areas, Santa Maria can also be used as a screen, and can be maintained as a shrub. The stems bleed a yellow latex when injured and the wood of the Santa Maria tree is valuable for ship building and cabinet work. The bark is almost black and is longitudinally furrowed and quite attractive.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Calophyllum brasiliense*

Pronunciation: kal-oh-FILL-um bruh-sill-ee-EN-see

Common name(s): Santa Maria

Family: *Clusiaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; espalier; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck



Figure 1. Middle-aged Santa Maria.

or patio; reclamation plant; screen; shade tree; specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 40 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: oval; round; pyramidal

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

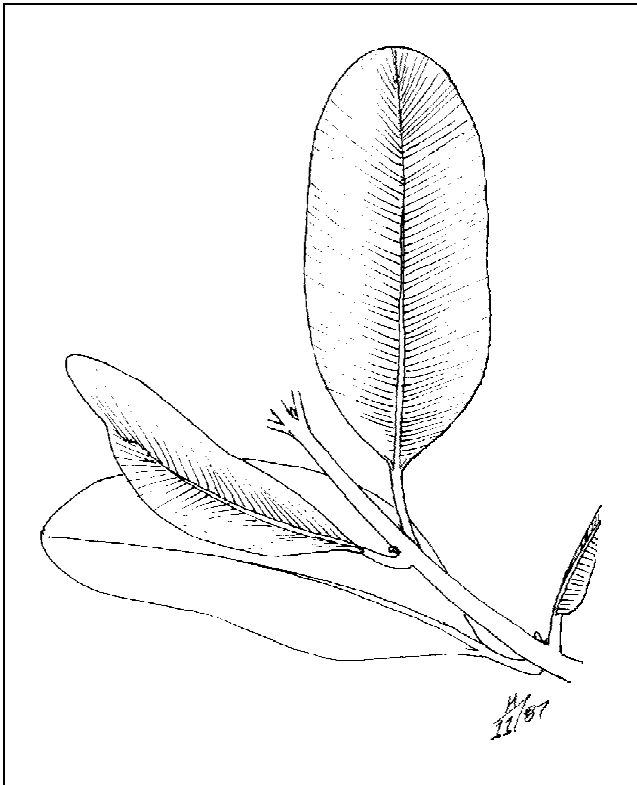


Figure 3. Foliage of Santa Maria.

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Santa Maria should be planted in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soil. It has good salt tolerance and is often seen along the beach. Grows well in confined soil spaces, such as along a street, and the tree should be propagated, sold and planted in urban areas much more often. Remember that the golfball-sized fruit is poisonous and hard, and this could be undesirable in the landscape under some circumstances. The trunk grows to about two feet in diameter.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.