Devilwood
Osmanthus americanus

INTRODUCTION
A native to the southeastern United States, Devilwood is a very attractive, small evergreen tree which is most commonly seen at 15 to 25 feet in height and sports lush, dark, olive green leaves throughout the year (Fig. 1). It is occasionally seen 30 to 40 feet tall in its native habitat and grows slowly. The clusters of small, white, fragrant, early springtime flowers are followed by the production of small, dark blue drupes, ripening in fall and persisting on the tree until the following spring, if not first consumed by birds and other wildlife. Its ease of growth, pest resistance, attractive foliage and flowers, and wildlife attracting fruits would make Devilwood a popular choice for naturalizing or the mixed shrubbery border. The trees tolerate heavy pruning particularly well and may also be used as a hedge. Devilwood is so-named because the fine-textured wood is difficult to split and hard to work.

GENERAL INFORMATION
Scientific name: *Osmanthus americanus*
Pronunciation: oz-MAN-TH-us uh-mair-ih-KAY-nus
Common name(s): Devilwood, Wild-Olive
Family: *Oleaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 9
Origin: native to North America
Uses: 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 or patio; reclamation plant; screen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION
Height: 15 to 25 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: round; vase shape
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); lanceolate; ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 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; spring flowering
Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: blue
Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
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
Naturally found along streambanks or swamp margins, Devilwood should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist, well-drained soil. Drought tolerance is moderate once established. The tree is probably as shade tolerant as any osmanthus. Not tested as an urban tree but may have some merit in wet soils. Propagation is by cuttings or seed, and is difficult by either.

Pests and Diseases
No pests or diseases are of major concern.