

Review Summary

University of Florida extension resources provide a balanced "review" of the 'Shady Lady' tree, highlighting its many benefits as well as specific drawbacks and care requirements for the Florida environment.

Advantages:

- **Aesthetics:** The tree is evergreen with a dense, symmetrical, and eye-catching appearance, known for its distinct, tiered horizontal branching.
- **Florida-Friendly:** It is approved as a Florida-Friendly Landscaping plant and is very tolerant of salt spray, making it ideal for coastal areas.
- **Hardiness:** The tree is drought-tolerant once established and generally wind-resistant.
- **Low Maintenance:** It requires minimal pruning and adapts to a variety of well-drained soil types.
- **Versatile Use:** Its size and shape make it suitable for a medium-sized shade tree, highway median tree, or a large hedge.

Disadvantages and Considerations:

- **Fruit Litter/Staining:** The tree produces small, black, seed capsules (not edible olives) which can create a litter problem and cause stains on sidewalks and driveways due to the tannin-rich droppings.
- **Frost Tender:** It is highly sensitive to frost. Temperatures below 32°F can damage the tree, and temperatures around 25°F are fatal, limiting its use to hardiness zones 10B-11 (primarily South Florida coastal areas).
- **Pests/Galls:** While generally healthy, it can occasionally be affected by small caterpillars that make a mess of the leaves or mites that induce odd, horn-like galls. These are generally minor issues.
- **Growth Rate:** It is not a fast-growing tree.

Conclusion

The UF/IFAS review emphasizes that the 'Shady Lady' is a **gorgeous and sustainable choice for the right location** (warm, coastal South Florida). Potential planters should be aware of its frost tender nature and the potential for fruit-related staining before committing.