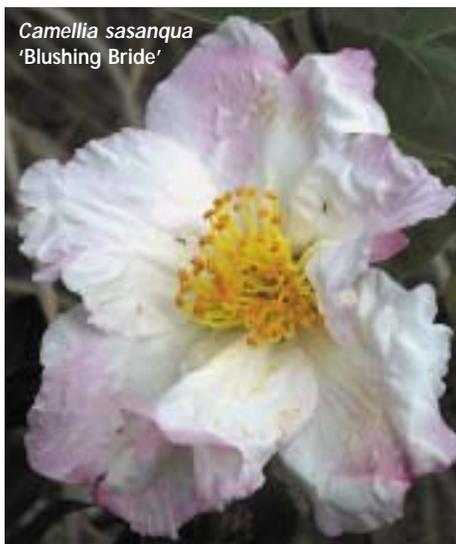


BROADLEAF EVERGREENS FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA

Evergreens are divided into two groups: Broadleaf and needle. Our concentration will be on the first group, as Leu Gardens is aware of the vast variety of broadleaf evergreens available. A good number has been planted to show the visitor how they can be used in the landscape. Most are easy to grow, require little care and maintenance and have a relatively long life span.

One of the most important evergreens at Leu Gardens is, of course, the camellia. There are over 400 species and cultivars throughout the Gardens in most areas that provide dappled shade. Harry P. Leu originally planted them on the property and many of them date back to the days when the Leus were residents here. *Camellia japonica* comprises the majority of the collection, have large showy flowers and bloom winter into late spring. *Camellia sasanqua* generally bloom late fall into winter, have small usually pastel colored flowers and have a more tree-like growth habit. There is also a small collection of species camellias found in the South Woods.

The Florida anise, *Illicium floridana*, and yellow anise, *Illicium*



Camellia sasanqua
'Blushing Bride'



Acca sellowiana

parviflorum, are both Florida natives, grow five to fifteen feet tall and are used for hedges or large screens. The yellow anise has fragrant foliage and pale greenish-yellow flowers. The Florida anise has a bright red flower and both plants are tolerant of deep shade.

Ternstroemia gymnanthera, or cleyera as it is commonly called, is not a new shrub but lately is becoming more popular. People have

begun to realize that the bronze leaves of the new growth, which turn to a glossy green as they mature, make a very attractive hedge or specimen plant. The cleyera comes in several named varieties and can grow from six to twelve feet high at maturity and can be grown in sun or light shade.



Myrica cerifera

Acca sellowiana, or pineapple guava, has been used in the Central Florida area for years and can form the backbone of the garden as it is drought tolerant, grows in sun or shade, is cold hardy, can be sheared for a hedge or grown loose as a specimen and also has attractive flowers followed by an edible fruit. The plant has recently been renamed, as many people will recognize it as Feijoa.

Cocculus laurifolia, or snailseed, is another good choice for screening as the plant can get to be fifteen feet tall. Snailseed is tolerant of almost any location, will grow in sun or shade, needs little care and its glossy leaves provide a good

backdrop for plants with lighter colored foliage. It does not lend itself to close shearing, as it tends to get very woody as it matures. Give it lots of room if you want this plant in your garden.

Myrica cerifera, wax myrtle, is another native plant that lends itself to a variety of uses in the garden. It can become a small tree if left alone with only occasional light pruning to shape it. It can also be used as a hedge or screen. Wax myrtle can be grown in full sun or light shade and there is a related species, *Myrica pumila*, which will only grow two to three feet high. Birds favor the berries and the leaves have a pungent aroma when crushed.

Camellia japonica 'Mary Jane Leu'



Gardenia augusta, or common gardenia, is of course, grown for the sweet fragrance of its flowers. There are over a dozen cultivars that have mature heights from three to ten

feet. Most cultivars are grafted, thus making them nematode resistant. They grow best in filtered light with fertile soil as they are heavy iron feeders and lack of iron will result in pale yellow leaves.

Viburnums have been used throughout Central Florida for years. *Viburnum suspensum* and *Viburnum odoratissimum* are two species that have consistently been used for hedges and screening. One viburnum that Leu Gardens is promoting is *Viburnum odoratissimum* var. awabuki.

It is a fast growing shrub with large glossy leaves and can be used for hedges, screening or as a specimen small tree. Awabuki looks very tropical and fits in with the landscape at the Gardens plus



Cleyera japonica

the fact that it is cold hardy. Viburnums can be grown in the full sun or light shade.

Hollies are always a nice addition to a garden. Some varieties to be found in the Gardens are *Ilex cassine* (dahoon

holly), *Ilex vomitoria* 'Stoke's Dwarf' and 'Bordeaux' (dwarf yaupons), *Ilex vomitoria pendula* (weeping yaupon holly), *Ilex latifolia* (Lusterleaf holly), *Ilex rotunda* (Roundleaf holly) and the Red Holly Hybrids that include 'Cardinal', 'Festive', 'Oak Leaf', 'Robin' and 'Little Red'. Some of the benefits of growing hollies are obviously the red berries in the fall, relatively low maintenance and shiny leaves. Most hollies need full sun but will tolerate partial shade.

Nageia nagi or broadleaf podocarpus, is another evergreen underused in the landscape. Nagi can be grown as a medium size tree, as a hedge or screen and as a specimen plant. It is pest free, a moderate grower and its dark green leaves set the plant off from others in the garden. It was formerly known as Podocarpus nagi and can be grown in sun or full shade.

Xylosma congestum or shiny xylosma, is still a relatively

unknown plant but is beginning to find its way into the trade. The benefits are evergreen small shiny green leaves that are maroon when young. It is cold hardy, drought tolerant, relatively pest-free and fast growing. *Xylosma* can be sheared as a hedge, grown as a single small tree and can be grown in full sun or part shade.

Severinia buxifolia or boxthorn, is a small shrub that may attain six feet in height at maturity. It can be used in full sun or partial shade and can be used in place of boxwood. It can be sheared, has thorns up to half an inch and can make a good barrier in high traffic areas.

Small white flowers appear in the spring



Illicium floridana
'alba'

followed by small black berries. This shrub is very drought tolerant once it is established.

Forestiera segregata or Florida privet, is a native evergreen shrub with dark green leaves. It grows very densely and makes a good screen or hedge as it can grow up to ten feet tall. It can be grown in sun or light shade and is very drought tolerant.

For those interested in obtaining the above-mentioned evergreens, most are available in the nursery trade; however, *Xylosma* and *Forestiera* may take some searching.

– Helen BeVier and Eric Schmidt