East Bay Nursery

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood

Lyonothamnus floribundus ssp. aspleniifolius

Height: 30 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8a

Other Names: Fern-leaf Ironwood

Description:

A slender, upright California native tree with an open canopy; fibrous shredding bark reveals deep cinnamon new bark; ferny, scallop-toothed leaves are unusual and attractive; white flowers in summer, age to dark brown and persist for years on the tree



Santa Cruz Island Ironwood
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood has attractive green evergreen foliage on a tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. The serrated ferny compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. The shaggy gray bark and brick red branches are extremely showy and add significant winter interest.



Santa Cruz Island Ironwood foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood is an open evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting birds and squirrels to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent

Planting & Growing

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood will grow to be about 30 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 5 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is very fussy about its soil conditions and must have sandy, acidic soils to ensure success, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.



Santa Cruz Island Ironwood bark
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder