

Waxmyrtle

Myrica cerifera 'Suwanee Elf'

In the wild waxmyrtle is found in moist to swampy sites. Its leaves are evergreen. 'Suwanee Elf' is a dwarf cultivar with smaller leaves and a compact habit. Very tough and easily-grown, southern waxmyrtle can tolerate a variety of landscape settings from full sun to partial shade, wet swamplands or high, dry and alkaline areas. Growth is thin in total shade. It is also very salt-tolerant (soil and aerosol), making it suitable for seaside applications. The plants are either male or female. That is, a plant will bear either pollen-bearing flowers or seed-producing flowers, not both. Its fruits are an important wildlife food. Crushed leaves give a characteristic aroma of bayberry and are applied to exposed skin as an emergency insect repellent. The only drawback to the plant is its tendency to sprout from the roots which can be a nuisance as they need to be removed several times each year to keep the tree looking sharp.

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Type: evergreen shrub to small tree

USDA hardiness zones: 7b through 11

Uses: specimen; accent; mass planting

Origin: native to Florida

Height: 3 to 4 feet **Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

Plant spacing: 4 to 6 feet

Light requirement: full sun to part shade

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerances: high

Soil salt tolerances: high

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: There are no known pests or problems



Photo: UF/ IFAS