

Botanical Name: Forestiera neomexicana

Common Name: Desert olive

Type of Plant: Dicot: shrub Family Oleaceae

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape a multistemmed deciduous shrub with several - many upright stems forming a full oval to rounded canopy; lateral branchlets may be spiny-tipped

Height 6 - 10ft (15ft) Spread equal or more Growth Rate moderate - rapid

Environment:

Exposure full sun - thrives in hot exposed sites; tolerates shade

Soil prefers sandy soils but tolerates most

Hardiness hardy (zones 11-13, 18-23): best-suited to warm foothill/valley locations

Morphology:

Leaves pinnate, opposite (sometimes fascicled), obovate to oblong, 1 - 1 1/2" long with smooth to finely serrate margins; bright green

Flowers inconspicuous, appearing before the leaves, in small clusters (March-April)

Fruit a small blue-black drupe (1/4" long)

Propagation: seed or hardwood cuttings

Usage: a good quick-effects background or screening plant, valued for its great durability in difficult habitats; excellent for dry slopes; best for dry woodlands, desert or mediterranean theme gardens

Landscape Care:

Watering tolerates regular - thrives on little irrigation after established

Fertilizing none required after established

Pruning head back as needed to control overall size; can be trained as a hedge

Pests/Diseases relatively free

Other grows very rapidly if watered regularly - control size by giving less water

Origin: canyons of coastal and desert foothills - Riverside Co. to Baja Calif.