

## Tea Olive Tree / Shrub

Tea olives, also known as sweet olive, sweet [osmanthus](#), and fragrant olive, are evergreen shrubs. They have glossy evergreen leaves and produce clusters of small white flowers that are well-loved for their heady floral perfume.

Native to Asia, there are about 15 different species of tea olive, all of which are grown in warm areas within [USDA hardiness zones](#) 8b to 11a. The different species vary in size and appearance, with some differences in leaf shape and color, though most boast some variation of glossy dark green leaves and clusters of tiny white flowers. Tea olives grow at a slow to moderate pace, adding between four and 12 inches a year. Their blossoms appear in spring, blooming heavily through early summer, and then flowering intermittently through fall.

### Tea Olive Care

These shrubs are easy to grow and they respond well to being transplanted or heavy pruning. They're grown commonly throughout the southern United States as a landscaping shrub prized for their fragrant flowers, with a scent that has been compared to jasmine, orange blossoms, and ripe apricots or peaches.

When cultivated properly, tea olive can grow up to 30 feet tall. These plants can also be trained to grow in different forms such as [privacy hedges](#), small tree forms, or [espalier](#). The related American native *Cartrema americanus* is known as "devilwood" and is the only variety of tea olive that is tolerant of salt spray, making it a good option for coastal locations.

Several factors contribute to tea olive shrubs blooming successfully. One of the most important is ensuring your plant gets enough sunlight—the more light the plants receive, the better their flower display will be (that being said, you don't want your plant to get scorched by harsh rays). Beyond light needs, make sure to prune your plant at the right time of year (if at all) so you don't accidentally cut off soon-to-be blooms.