

Ligustrum spp.

Ligustrums are cold-hardy evergreen shrubs and trees that are commonly used in landscapes throughout Brevard County. There are approximately 50 different species of ligustrum, most of which are native to the far east. Of those 50, only a few are grown for use in landscapes.

Perhaps the most popular and versatile of the ligustrum is the *Ligustrum Japonicum* or Wax Privet. This species is used in the landscape as a large hedge or small tree. Leaves are dark, glossy green and are arranged oppositely along each stem. During late spring or early summer, small white flower spikes are produced on branch tips or terminal growth. This species is often used as a small tree to about 12 feet in height. There are a number of cultivars available with this species, such as "*Recurvifolia*", which has a curled leaf. Another is the "*Howardi*", which has yellow and green variegated foliage. Both of these cultivars can be used as a large hedge in the landscape.

Ligustrum Sinensis is another species, it has very small leaves that are normally variegated. This species can be trimmed for a formal looking plant around foundation areas. Ligustrums will grow well in full sun to partial shade and can stand a moderate amount of salt spray in coastal areas.

Planting:

Best growth can be expected when plants are set in a well-drained, improved soil in full sun or partial shade. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** in soil for strong healthy root growth. Plants should be placed in the ground at soil level, and mulch should be applied around the root area to help keep the soil moist. Water plants thoroughly every other day for the first two weeks. For the next four to six weeks, water at the rate of two to three thorough waterings per week.

Fertilizing:

Ligustrum should be fertilized at least two to three times during the growing season. Use **Espoma Plant-tone** in early spring, and then several times before summer and in early fall. Apply 1/2 to 1 cup of fertilizer to each plant, distributing lightly over the entire root zone.

For larger shrubs or trees, use 1 to 3 pounds of **Espoma Plant-tone**, and distribute again, lightly over the entire root zone which extends out to and just beyond the canopy spread, especially when sheared as a hedge. For established plants you can use **Dynamite** every six months.

Plant Problems:

Leaf Spot: Fungus which causes spots or blotches on older leaves; may cause some leaf drop. Usually not a serious problem.

Solution: If fungus spreads throughout the plant, spray with a **Copper Fungicide** or **Liquid Systemic Fungicide** according to the proper application rate as specified on the label.

Soil pH: Ligustrum performs poorly in acidic soil. Correct the soil pH to 7.5.

