



## UT Gardens January Plant of the Month:

### Small Anise tree

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone enjoyed the holiday season. We are going to start off this new year with a look at the UT Gardens January plant of the month, the small anise tree. Dr. Sue Hamilton is our guest contributor to Chris' Corner this month.

Dr. Hamilton writes:

For a bright and showy winter shrub, you can't beat 'Florida Sunshine.' The cultivar is a member of the species *Illicium parviflorum*, also known as small anise tree or Ocala yellow star.

Introduced by distinguished plantsman Tony Avent, of Plant Delights Nursery in Raleigh, N.C., Florida Sunshine features unique chartreuse leaves that distinguish this small-leaf anise from others. The foliage all but glows in shady areas and in the fall the color changes to a bright yellow-gold while the leaf petioles and stems turn a contrasting scarlet-red. Both provide for nothing less than a brilliant show in a sometimes dull winter landscapes.

Another great feature of this plant is that its evergreen foliage is wonderfully licorice scented. Although they are not notably showy, white flowers accent the gold foliage in late spring. Florida Sunshine exhibits cold hardiness in zones six through nine.

Florida Sunshine is a vigorous specimen, growing to be a dense shrub measuring six feet to eight feet tall by four feet to six feet wide. Winter shade is recommended to reduce leaf burn. Although the plant is tolerant of a wide

range of soil conditions wet soil results in the fastest growth. Left alone by deer, this plant is a good choice for a woodland setting, foundation plantings, mixed borders, evergreen screens or even decorative containers.

Florida Sunshine looks great year round, but it especially glows on a gray winter day. When mature, this small anise tree can be a bright garden focal point.

Dr. Sue Hamilton is on the faculty in the University of Tennessee Department of Plant Sciences and also serves as Director of the UT Gardens. The University of Tennessee Gardens located in Knoxville and Jackson are part of the UT Institute of Agriculture. Their mission is to foster the appreciation and stewardship of plants through garden displays, collections, educational programs and research trials. The gardens are open during all seasons and free to the public. See <http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/> and <http://westtennessee.tennessee.edu/ornamentals/> for more information.

I would like to thank Dr. Hamilton for her informative contribution to Chris' Corner on the anise tree. I also enjoyed Carol Reese's lecture about the anise tree during one of our Master Gardener classes. She even told a joke about the incorrect pronunciation of the tree which was pretty funny!

Until next time, happy gardening!



*Christopher Cornell*