Introduction
Florida soapberry grows at a moderate rate to 30 to 40 feet tall. The pinnately compound, evergreen leaves are 12 inches long with each leaflet four inches long. 10-inch-long panicles of small, white flowers appear during fall, winter, and spring but these are fairly inconspicuous. The fleshy fruits which follow are less than an inch-long, shiny, and orange/brown. The seeds inside are poisonous, a fact which should be considered in the tree’s placement in the landscape, especially if children will be present. The bark is rough and gray. The common name of Soapberry comes from to the soap-like material which is made from the berries in tropical countries.

General Information
Scientific name: Sapindus saponaria
Pronunciation: SAP-in-dus sap-oh-NAIR-ee-uh
Common name(s): Florida soapberry, wingleaf soapberry
Family: Sapindaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 10A through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Invasive potential: little invasive potential
Uses: tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; reclamation; street without sidewalk; shade; highway median
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

Description
Height: 30 to 40 feet
Spread: 25 to 35 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical  
Crown shape: round  
Crown density: dense  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound  
Leaf margin: undulate, sinuate/undulate  
Leaf shape: linear, lanceolate  
Leaf venation: pinnate, brachidodrome  
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

![Figure 3. Foliage](image)

**Flower**

Flower color: white/cream/gray  
Flower characteristics: not showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: round  
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch  
Fruit covering: fleshy  
Fruit color: orange, brown  
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns  
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure  
Breakage: resistant  
Current year twig color: gray, brown  
Current year twig thickness: medium  
Wood specific gravity: unknown

**Culture**

Light requirement: full sun  
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

**Drought tolerance**: high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance**: high

**Other**

Roots: not a problem  
Winter interest: no  
Outstanding tree: yes  
Ozone sensitivity: unknown  
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown  
Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

Soapberry can be planted in low maintenance landscapes for the unusually prominent, orange-colored berries. They require little care other than some initial pruning to direct growth and to develop a strong branch structure. The bushy growth habit of this medium-sized tree combines nicely with shrubs and ground covers planted beneath and around the tree. Fruits attract the boxelder bug.

Florida Soapberry should be grown in full sun and will tolerate almost any soil. It is highly drought- and salt-tolerant.

Propagation is by seed.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern.