

Caring for **bucida variegata**

By Dr CHRISTOPHER TEH

Do you have a question about plants or how to maintain your garden? Send your questions to the Plant Doctor! Email your questions to lifestyle@thestar.com.my with "Plant Doctor" in the subject field. Questions may be edited for brevity and clarity.

Dear Plant Doctor,

Q Are the roots of the pokok doa invasive, strong or aggressive? Will they damage the rubble or retaining walls? Thank you. – *Jarred Chong*

Variegated Black Olive, also known as pokok doa or *Bucida variegata*, is a popular choice for landscaping because of its unique architectural form.

This tree is also sought after because of its low maintenance requirements and moderate-to-fast growth rate, typically reaching heights of 9-15m, with the potential of reaching up to 25m under optimal conditions.

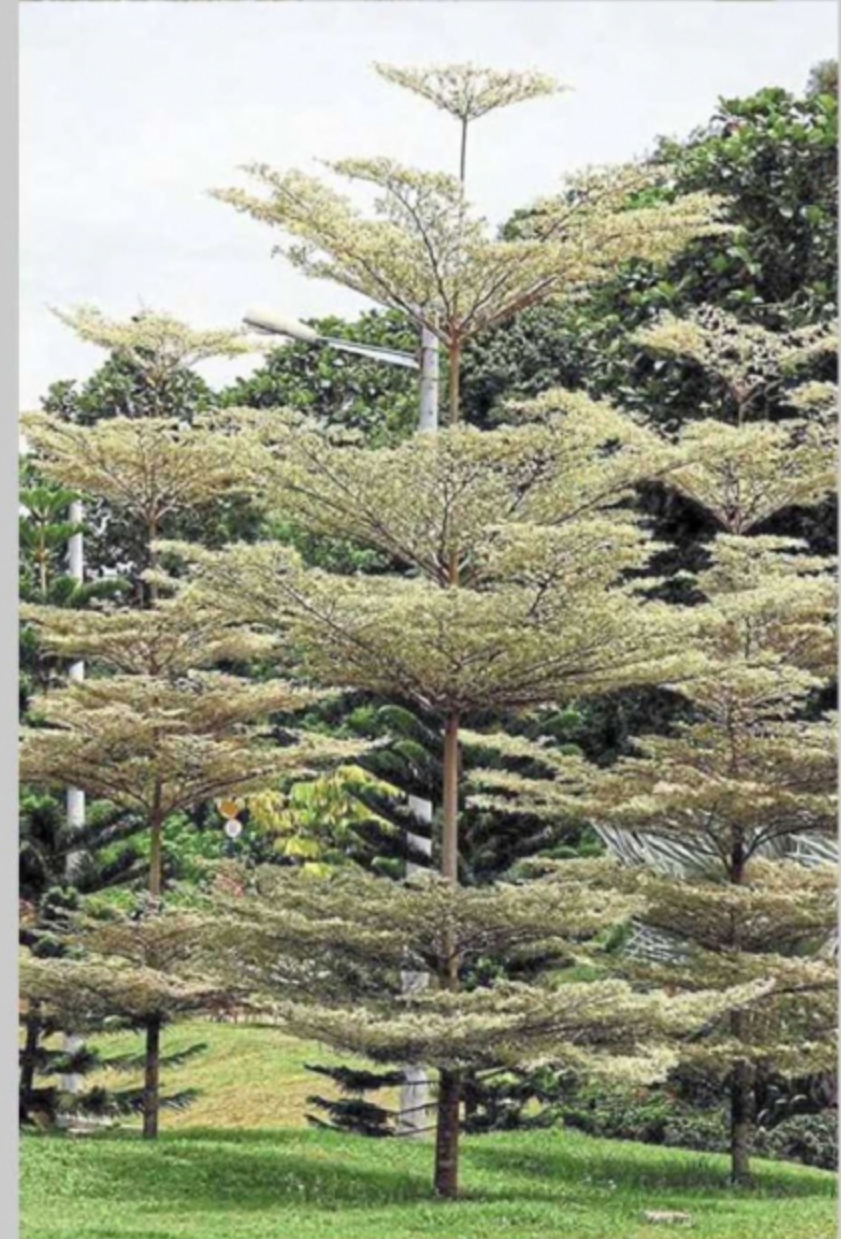
Although the roots of *Bucida* trees are not known to be aggressive or invasive, their spread can potentially damage nearby structures if the tree is planted too close.

To avoid potential issues, it is recommended to plant the tree at least 10-15m away from buildings or other structures, as the roots can extend outwards to a similar distance.

There are field methods that can help control the spread of the roots, such as installing root barriers and pruning the tree canopy and roots.

However, these methods are specialised techniques that if not done carefully, can harm tree growth or cause stress to the tree.

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