



# AVALON MASTER HOA GREEN DECISION

## Reasons to Replace Ficus with Clusia

- **Pest Resistance:** The primary reason for replacement is the ficus's extreme vulnerability to the **ficus whitefly** infestation. Controlling these pests requires a constant, escalating cycle of chemical treatments which is ineffective as the pests simply move to neighboring yards and develop pesticide resistance. Clusia is highly resistant to most common pests and diseases, including the whitefly.
- **Root System:** Ficus trees are known for their aggressive and invasive root systems, which can crack sidewalks, driveways, and foundations, and even invade sewer and water pipes. Clusia roots are generally less problematic.
- **Maintenance:** Clusia is a low-maintenance plant once established. It is very drought-tolerant, handles the hot sun well, and thrives with minimal watering compared to the often demanding upkeep of a ficus hedge.
- **Durability and Climate Adaptability:** Clusia is resistant to salt, making it an excellent choice for coastal areas. It can also survive in a variety of soil types, including poor or sandy soils, and is generally more durable through various weather conditions.
- **Aesthetic and Function:** Clusia features thick, leathery, "paddle-like" leaves that create a dense, lush, and modern-looking privacy screen or sound barrier. The leaves are less prone to damage from trimming compared to ficus, though hand-pruning is still preferred for a clean look.
- **Environmental/Regulatory:** In some areas, such as certain towns and counties in South Florida, the non-native ficus has been essentially "banned" or discouraged due to the extensive whitefly problem and its environmental impact. Clusia (specifically *Clusia rosea*) is a Florida native, contributing positively to local ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

**In summary, clusia provides a more resilient, environmentally sound, and lower-effort solution for privacy and landscaping compared to the ongoing challenges associated with maintaining ficus hedges.**



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