

***Aesculus parviflora*: Bottlebrush Buckeye¹**

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<https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

This document is part of a series originally authored by Edward Gilman.

Introduction

Bottlebrush buckeye is a deciduous shrub that is native to Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia. This shrub has a rounded growth habit and reaches a height of 10 feet, and a spread of up to 15 feet (Figure 1). It has palmately-compound leaves (Figure 2), which display showy fall coloration (Figure 3). The plant also produces a showy summer display featuring masses of small, tubular white flowers arranged on upright cylindrical panicles (Figure 4). These panicles can range from 6 to 12 inches long and are displayed above the foliage (Figure 5). The flowers are highly attractive to pollinators. This plant is well suited as a specimen, screen, foundation, or border plant.



Figure 2. Leaf—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.

Credit: UF/IFAS



Figure 1. Full form—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.

Credit: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Full form, fall color—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.

Credit: UF/IFAS



Figure 4. Flower—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.

Credit: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 5. Full form, flowering—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.

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General Information

Scientific name: *Aesculus parviflora*

Pronunciation: ESS-kew-lus par-vif-FLOR-uh

Common name(s): bottlebrush buckeye

Family: *Sapindaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5A through 9A (Figures 6 and 7)

USDA Hardiness Zones 5A-9A

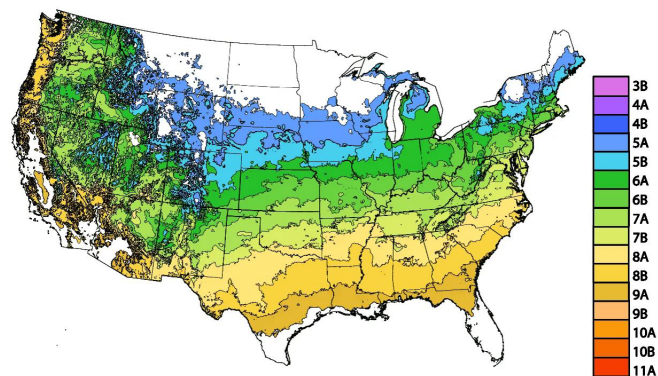


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 5A–9A.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

USDA Hardiness Zones 7B-9A

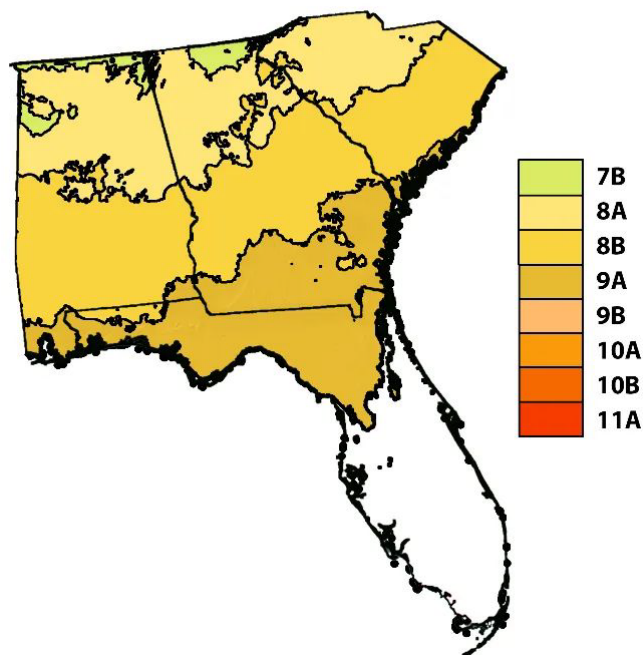


Figure 7. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 7B–9A.

Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/> for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Origin: not native to Florida

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: specimen; screen; foundation; border; attracts pollinators

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 5 to 10 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaf margin: crenate

Leaf shape: oblong; obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: summer-flowering, showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked stems; not particularly showy

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in partial shade; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 6 to 8 feet

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Toxicity: all parts of this plant exhibit medium toxicity if ingested; poison toxic principles include glycosides, saponins, and alkaloids

Use and Management

Bottlebrush buckeye thrives in partial to full shade. It is a moderately drought and flood tolerant species and may be planted in a variety of soil conditions. Consider the full size of this plant when placing it in the landscape, as this spreading shrub looks best in its natural unpruned shape. Fall coloration is yellow, occasionally developing into a short-lived showy display. Bottlebrush buckeye is an excellent plant for shaded or wet areas in the landscape and is highly attractive to pollinators. Care should be used with this plant around pets and children, as all parts of the plant are toxic if ingested, especially the nuts produced in the fall.

Design Considerations

Bottlebrush buckeye works well as a background or massing plant to highlight the forms and colors of companion plants and block undesirable views. The fine texture and medium leaves of the buckeye will show well with contrasting plant features such as large leaves, coarse texture, thick stems, and dark green or burgundy color. Other contrasting textures include thin blades and clumping, arching forms of grasses and other vase-shaped,

small-leaved shrubs. Contrasting size and shape such as low-growing groundcover with a sprawling, mounding form will emphasize the upright, arching shape of buckeye. To create large plant masses, select plants with similar characteristics that blend with the buckeye.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.

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