UF IFAS Extension UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

ENH360
doi.org/10.32473/EDIS-ST201-1993

Cotinus coggygria: Smoketree[1]

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson[2]

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Introduction

This slow growing, open-crowned, round, small tree eventually reaches to 10 to 15 feet tall (occasionally 20) and 10 to 15 feet wide. The large panicles of wispy cream-colored flowers produced in spring and early summer give the effect of a cloud of smoke. They make a wonderful accent in a shrub border and can be planted as a specimen or as a patio tree where the black, showy, multiple trunk can be displayed. Planting Smoketree is a good way to extend the spring flowering-tree season into the summer before the Crape-Myrtles come into full bloom. Fall color is usually good to excellent and ranges from yellow to orange and brilliant red-purple. Many people grow it simply to enjoy the vivid fall color.

Common name(s): Smoketree, Wig-Tree, Smokebush

Family: *Anacardiaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: specimen; deck or patio; street without sidewalk; container or planter; reclamation; trained as a standard; screen; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

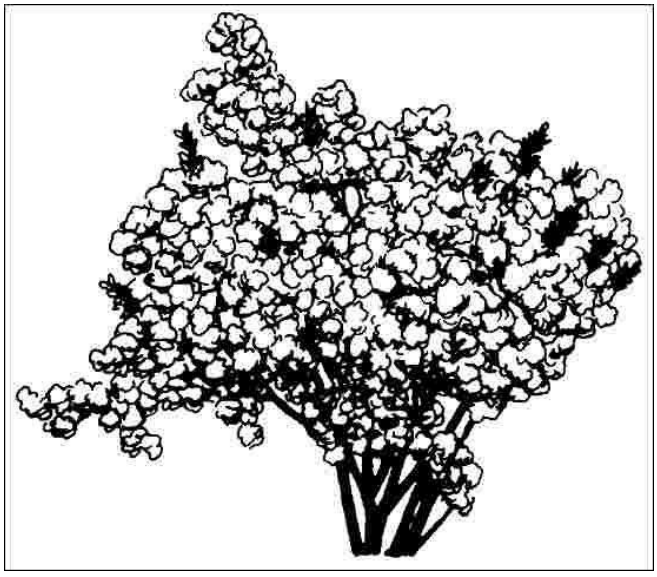


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Cotinus coggygria*: Smoketree

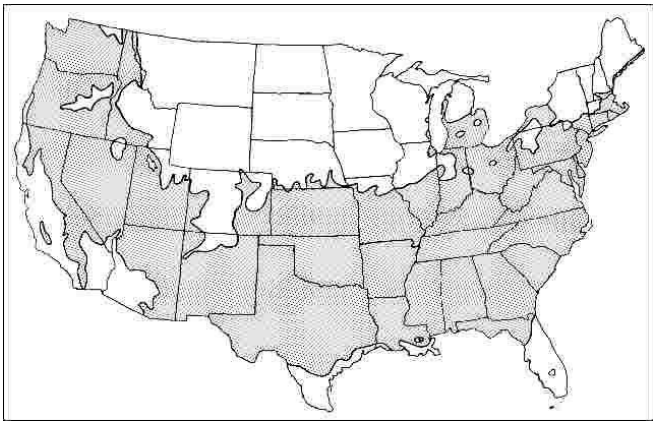


Figure 2. Range

General Information

Scientific name: *Cotinus coggygria*

Pronunciation: koe-TYE-nus koe-GUY-gree-uh

Description

Height: 10 to 15 feet

Spread: 10 to 18 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: round

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: obovate, elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: reticulate, pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green, green

Fall color: yellow, orange, red, purple

Fall characteristic: showy

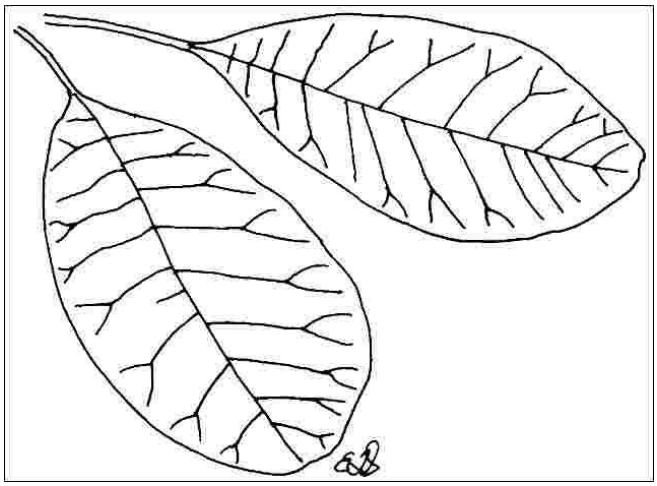


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: pink, white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, irregular

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium, thick

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

The tree is tough and adapts to restricted soil spaces. It could be used along a street under power lines and would not require pruning for many years. It is a small tree, well-adapted to urban areas with almost year-round interest which should be used more in our landscapes.

Smoketree grows best in a sunny location and a well-drained loam. It will grow asymmetrically and lean toward the light in a partially sunny area, so it is best to locate it in full day sun where the crown will develop symmetrically. Though sometimes short-lived in rich soil, Smoketree is useful in dry, rocky soil where there is no irrigation. It also grows in a wide range of soil pH, including alkaline. It is probably short-lived (20 years - maybe more) in most situations but who cares - the tree is great while it's around!

Propagation is by seed but there is considerable variation in leaf color. Cutting propagation can be accomplished in June or early July with IBA.

Cultivars include: `Daydream' - heavy production of panicles, dense habit of growth; `Flame' - brilliant orange-red fall color, pink inflorescences; `Nordine' - resembles `Royal Purple'; `Notcutt's Variety' - dark maroon-purple leaves (also known as `Foliis Purpureis Notcutt's Variety' and `Rubrifolius'); `Purpureus' - leaves bronze-green, inflorescences purplish-pink; `Royal Purple' - leaves are darker purple than `Notcutt's Variety', rich red-purple fall color, purplish-red inflorescences; `Pendulus' - pendulous branches; and `Velvet Cloak' - dark purple-leaf form, spectacular fall color of reddish-purple.

Pests

Oblique-banded leaf roller mines and rolls the leaves, usually in June. The insect rarely occurs in sufficient numbers to warrant control. When it does occur they can be picked off by hand or sprayed with *Bacillus thuringiensis* .

Diseases

Leaf spots can be caused by various genera of fungi but are usually not serious.

Scab may cause leaf drop. No controls are listed.

The most serious disease is Verticillium wilt. Smoketree is very susceptible, and entire branches wilt and die. Prune out infected branches, fertilize, and water the plant during dry weather.

A stem canker can be a problem in the eastern U.S.

[1] This document is ENH360, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture. Original publication date November 1993. Revised December 2006. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.*

[2] Edward F. Gilman , professor emeritus, Department of Environmental Horticulture;Dennis G. Watson , former associate professor, UF/IFAS Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Gainesville, FL; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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