Shaving Brush Tree

Pseudobombax ellipticum



Shaving Brush Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 25 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 9

Description:

An interesting winter-deciduous tree that grows quite large in its natural habitat, but is generally maintained as a large shrub here; amazing white pincushion flowers in spring resemble a shaving brush; a wonderful landscape accent; protect from frost

Ornamental Features

Shaving Brush Tree features showy white pincushion flowers at the ends of the branches in early spring before the leaves. The flowers are excellent for cutting. It has green deciduous foliage which emerges red in spring. The textured oval compound leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. The mottled gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Shaving Brush Tree is a multi-stemmed deciduous tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Shaving Brush Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Shaving Brush Tree will grow to be about 25 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Shaving Brush Tree is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.