



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Calliandra haematocephala 'Alba'¹

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Introduction

This large, multiple trunked, low-branching, evergreen shrub has silky leaflets which are glossy copper when new, turning to a dark metallic green (Fig. 1). The profuse, fragrant bloom is the main reason for its popularity, with big puffs, 2 to 3 inches across, of white silky stamens, produced during warm months. Many stems ascend from the ground on older plants giving rise to a gorgeous, round canopy of white flowers. It can become quite bushy and overpowering in a small landscape unless it is trained to a small tree or thinned regularly.

General Information

Scientific name: *Calliandra haematocephala* 'Alba'

Pronunciation: kal-lee-AN-druh hee-mat-oh-SEFF-uh-luh

Common name(s): White Powderpuff

Family: *Leguminosae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; container or above-ground planter; specimen; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

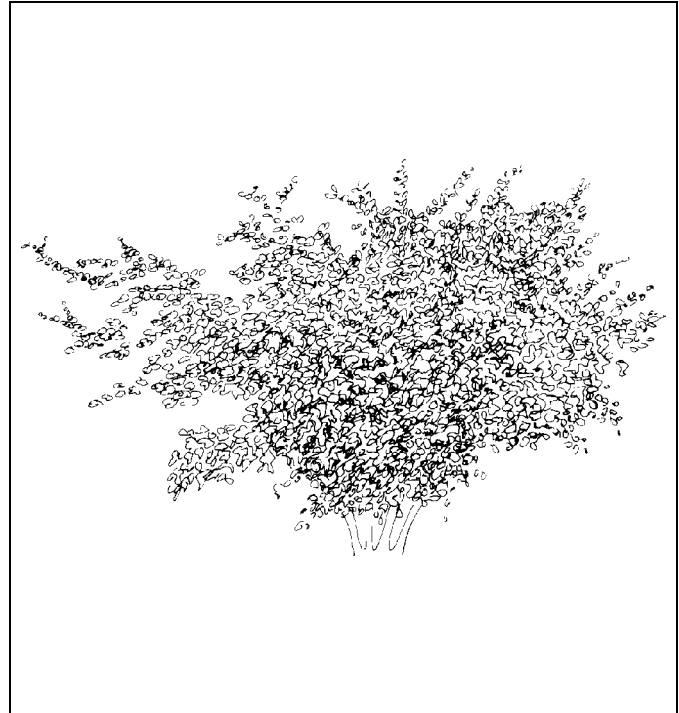


Figure 1. White Powderpuff.

Height: 6 to 8 feet

Spread: 8 to 12 feet

Plant habit: vase shape

Plant density: open

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Description

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-88, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: even-pinnately compound
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: parallel; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Powderpuff can grow to about 15 feet tall when trained and pruned into a small tree. Develop a short trunk by staking or heading back lateral branches until a sturdy trunk can support the developing canopy. The long, arching branches form an attractive canopy suitable for patio or container plantings. Pinching the new growth increases branch number and produces more flowers on a more compact plant. Although plants are damaged by freezing temperatures, they grow back from the base in the spring throughout USDA hardiness zone 9.

With rapid growth in sandy soils and full sun, Powderpuff Bush will respond favorably to regular watering while young but should require no special care once established except an occasional pruning to keep it within bounds. Powderpuff may be maintained as a tall (5 to 6-foot) flowering, clipped hedge. It is often seen as a small, flowering specimen tree with the lower branches pruned off. It makes an effective, colorful wind break as it grows denser.

Pests and Diseases

While usually pest-free, Powderpuff foliage can be occasionally infested by mites, and eaten by caterpillars, or other chewing insects.

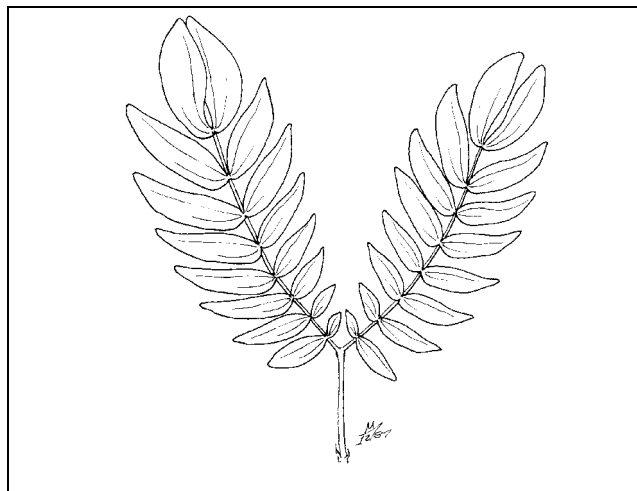


Figure 3. Foliage of White Powderpuff