Calliandra haematocephala ‘Nana’

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Introduction

A selection of the more common powderpuff, this compact cultivar grows to only about 5 feet tall. Pinnately compound leaves bear fewer leaflets and flowers are smaller than the species. Red flowers are borne throughout the canopy in the warm months of the year. Whereas the species develops an open growth habit without pruning, this selection stays compact and dense. In many ways it is superior to the species if a small shrub is needed.

General Information

Scientific name: Calliandra haematocephala ‘Nana’
Pronunciation: kal-lee-AN-drh hee-mat-oh-SEFF-uh-luh
Common name(s): Dwarf Red Powderpuff
Family: Leguminosae
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 1)
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; foundation; attracts butterflies; mass planting; 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: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 3 to 5 feet
Spread: 4 to 8 feet
Plant habit: round
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

Foliage

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: pink; 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
Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Trunk and Branches

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

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

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: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Use and Management

Dwarf Powderpuff makes a fine hedge requiring less frequent pruning than the species. Plant on 4- to 5-foot centers to establish a solid hedge or border. Its small size also makes it suited for planting along a house foundation.

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.

Pests and Diseases

Since the plant has not been widely used, pest problems are not well understood. Look for the same problems as you may find on the larger Powderpuff trees.