



Aesculus indica Indian Horsechestnut¹

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INTRODUCTION

Indian Horsechestnut is a large, rounded tree, reaching up to 100 feet in height, with nine-inch-long leaves and smooth, grayish-red bark (Fig. 1). Trees grown in an open landscape setting probably reach about 40 to 60 feet tall. In June and July, the tree is decorated with upright panicles of white blooms, the flowers stalks most often seen four to six inches high but they may be much larger. These blooms are followed by the production of a spiny, green fruit which holds several brown seeds.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Aesculus indica*

Pronunciation: ESS-kew-lus IN-dih-kuh

Common name(s): Indian Horsechestnut

Family: *Hippocastanaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 60 feet

Spread: 35 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: oval; round

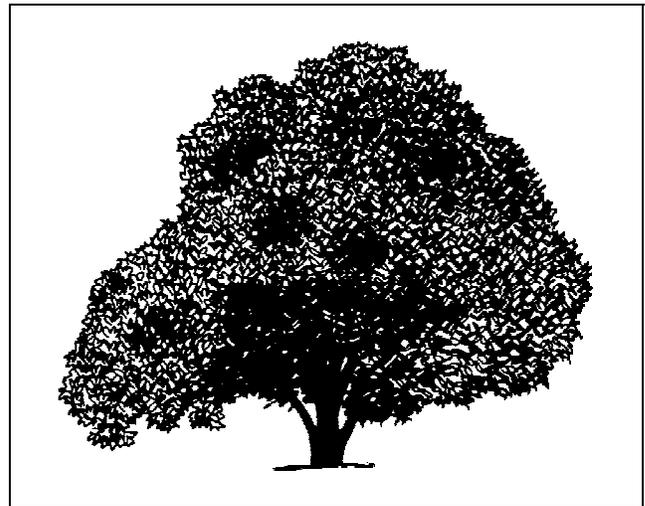


Figure 1. Mature Indian Horsechestnut.

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaflet margin: serrate; undulate

Leaflet shape: obovate

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaflet blade length: 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: orange

Fall characteristic: not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: summer flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; gray

Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

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



Figure 3. Foliage of Indian Horsechestnut.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree has not been extensively available, but could make a nice park or landscape tree for a large commercial landscape or an estate. It has been successfully grown in California and in the northwest part of the United States, and could be tried in the east. The cold hardiness of the plant is uncertain. The coarse texture, low branching habit and uniformly round canopy make it stand out among other trees. Children would enjoy climbing this well-branched tree. The beauty of this tree calls for some trials in the eastern part of the country.

The cultivar 'Sydney Pearce' has richer green leaves and flower-spikes 12 inches high.

Pests and Diseases

The pests and diseases affecting this tree are not well understood due to the limited experience with this tree.