



Dombeya wallichii Pinkball¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Nothing could be more attention-getting than Pinkball when in full bloom (Fig. 1). Huge, pendent clusters of tightly-packed, five to six-inch-diameter, pink flowers give much the impression of upsidedown corsages intermixed with large, coarsely-textured, light green leaves. Pinkball maintains a rounded form and can grow to 20 feet in height with an equal spread and makes a spectacular specimen planting or patio tree. It is usually grown as a shrub.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Dombeya wallichii*

Pronunciation: dom-BEE-yuh wall-ICK-ee-eye

Common name(s): Pinkball

Family: *Sterculiaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: near a deck or patio; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 20 to 25 feet

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

Crown shape: round

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium



Figure 1. Mature Pinkball.

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: crenate; serrate

Leaf shape: cordate

Leaf venation: pinnate; palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-232, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing rapidly in full sun to partial shade on a wide variety of soils, Pinkball needs protection from frost and is not salt-tolerant. Flower heads fall from the tree, remaining pink for a number of days. The dried flower heads will need to be cleaned up for a neat appearance beneath the tree but otherwise it is a

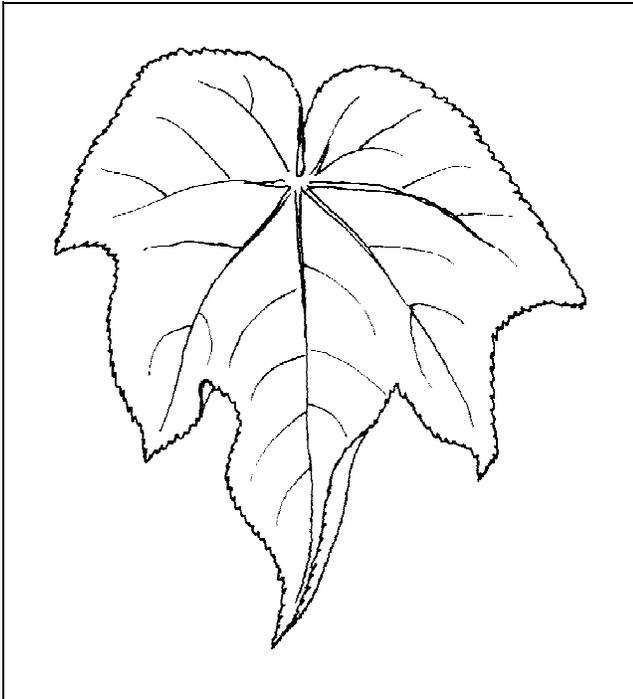


Figure 3. Foliage of Pinkball.

very low-maintenance tree. Plants can be watered until established and then forgotten except in the driest locations.

There are several hybrids available.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings which root quickly and easily.

Pests

Aphids, soft scale, nematodes, and sooty mold are minor problems for Pinkball.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.