

Pinckneya pubens *Pinckneya*¹

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INTRODUCTION

In earlier days, malaria and other fevers were treated at home with a medicine made from the inner bark of this deciduous, 30-foot-tall, North American native tree, giving it the common name "Fevertree" (Fig. 1). The tree is also referred to as *Pinckneya bractea*. The tree is more commonly seen at 15 to 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide as an open-grown landscape tree. The large, dark green leaves, five to eight inches long and three to four inches wide, have a lighter underside and are covered with a light fuzz when young. The clusters of yellowish-green, 2.5-inch-long tubular flowers are made more conspicuous by the cream to bright rose-colored, petal-like sepals, making Fevertree quite spectacular when it is in full bloom in early summer. The brown, spotted, round seed capsules which follow stay on the trees throughout the winter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Pinckneya pubens*

Pronunciation: PINK-nee-uh PEW-benz

Common name(s): Pinckneya, Fevertree

Family: *Rubiaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

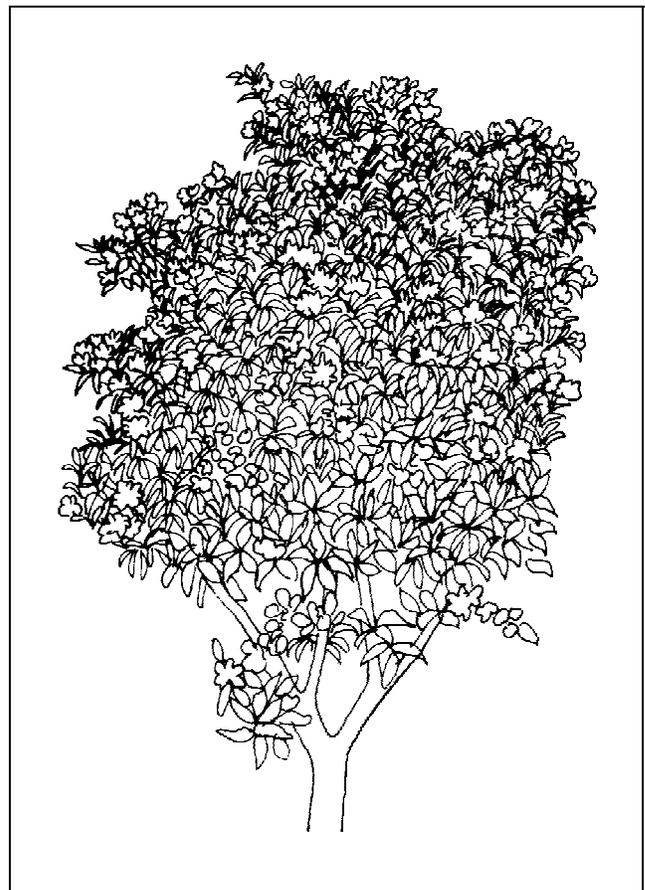


Figure 1. Young *Pinckneya*.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 12 to 18 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown density: open
Growth rate: medium
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; yellow
Flower characteristics: summer flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; gray
Current year twig thickness: medium

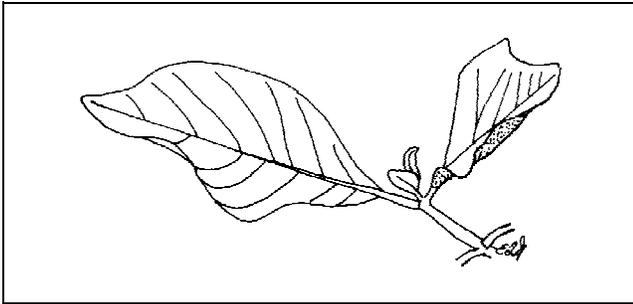


Figure 3. Foliage of Pinckneya.

Culture

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

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; extended
flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

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: no pests are normally seen on the
tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The unusual, open, coarse habit of growth and showy flowers make this a conversation piece in any yard. Use it as an accent in a sunny shrub border or as a specimen near the patio or deck. This is certainly a tree to consider when planning a yard due to the small size and pest resistance.

Found in its native habitat on poorly drained land or along swamp-margins, Fevertree should only be planted on moist soils or those areas which are flooded with rains periodically throughout the year. Although best flowering appears to be in full sun, trees grown in partial shade will grow but flower poorly. Not for a landscape unless it is occasionally irrigated during dry summers.

Propagation is by seed or division of the many root-suckers.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.