Abelia x grandiflora ‘Sherwoodii’

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Introduction

This popular cultivar of Glossy Abelia is a fine-textured, semi-evergreen, small shrub with 1.5-inch-long, red-tinged leaves arranged along thin, stiff stems (Fig. 1). Leaves and flowers are smaller than the species. It is much more compact than the species, resembling the Japanese or Yaupon Hollies. Considered to be evergreen in its southern range, Glossy Abelia will lose some of its leaves in colder climates, the remaining leaves taking on a more pronounced red color. Reaching a height of 3 to 6 feet with a spread of 6 to 10 feet, the mounded form of ‘Sherwoodii’ Glossy Abelia is clothed from spring through fall with terminal clusters of delicate pink and white, small, tubular flowers.

General Information

Scientific name: Abelia x grandiflora ‘Sherwoodii’
Pronunciation: uh-BEE-uh gran-dif-FLOR-uh
Common name(s): Dwarf Glossy Abelia, ‘Sherwoodii’ Glossy Abelia
Family: Caprifoliaceae
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: hedge; border; mass planting; attracts butterflies
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 3 to 4 feet
Spread: 4 to 6 feet
Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine
**Abelia x grandiflora 'Sherwoodii' -- Dwarf Glossy Abelia**

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** whorled
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** serrate
- **Leaf shape:** ovate
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
- **Leaf color:** purple or red
- **Fall color:** purple
- **Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering; pleasant fragrance

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** oval
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** tan
- **Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

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

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**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.
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
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Ideally suited as low-growing foundation plants, Abelia is also excellent as a tall ground cover for a large-scale commercial or industrial landscape. It can be sheared into a formal hedge or into any of a number of topiary shapes. It is nicely suited for training into a low hedge bordering a sidewalk. Growth rate is slow to moderate making it easy to keep it from growing out of bounds with two clippings per year.

Space plants 4 to 5 feet apart in a mass planting. Be sure to set plants several feet back from a walk, driveway or lawn area, because plants grow wider than tall and often require pruning to control their lateral growth. If you need to prune in this manner, be sure to leave the bottom of the plant much wider than the top so lower foliage is left on the plant. If you attempt to shear vertically, the lower branches are shaded and often lose foliage. This will give the shrub an unsightly, dark, leafless bottom.

Glossy Abelia enjoys fairly rich, moist but well-drained soil in a full sun or lightly shaded location and has good drought-tolerance. Plants become thin and unattractive in the shade and do not flower. Plant on 4 to 6 foot centers to form a foundation planting, slightly closer for a hedge. The foliage darkens during the winter but plants generally remain full all during the cold months.

Cultivars include: ‘Francis Mason’, new green foliage changes to glossy yellow as it matures, color more noticeable in full sun, light pink flowers, 3 to 4 feet high; ‘Prostrata’, prostrate growth habit, white flowers, sometimes used as a ground cover. Abelia ‘Edward Goucher’, a hybrid between Abelia x grandiflora and Abelia schumannii, has abundant lavender-pink flowers and showy red calyces, reaches 5 feet, and is best used in USDA hardiness zone 6.

Propagation is by cuttings of long, leafless, hardwood stems taken in November to January.

Pests and Diseases

None of major concern but occasionally bothered by aphids.