



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Fothergilla major*¹

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Introduction

This 6- to 10-foot tall shrub covers itself with soft, white flowers each spring before leaves emerge (Fig. 1). It appears to be covered with snow when in full bloom. Bright red, orange or yellow fall color bring the shrub back to life before leaves fall to the ground.

General Information

Scientific name: *Fothergilla major*

Pronunciation: faw-thur-GIL-luh MAY-jur

Common name(s): Large Fothergilla

Family: *Hamamelidaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to North America

Uses: accent; border; mass planting

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

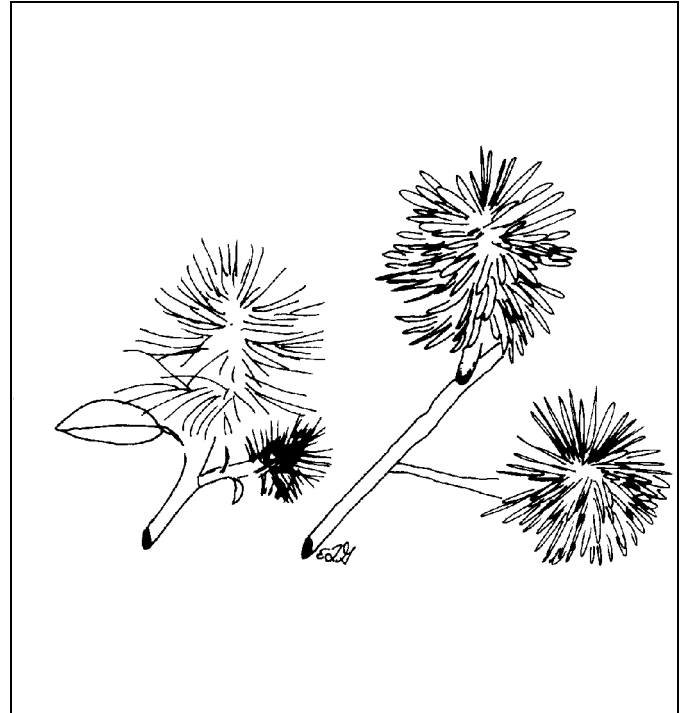


Figure 1. Large Fothergilla.

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: dentate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate; orbiculate

Description

Height: 6 to 10 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-215, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red; yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: black
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; loam; clay; sand;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

The rounded form and large size makes this most appropriate for planting in a larger yard, away from the house. Use it in a shrub border to spice up the yard in spring and fall. Plant it near the corner of a large commercial building and leave it unpruned to allow the natural rounded form to emerge. Clipping the plant can reduce flowering so locate it where it can grow to its natural size.

Fothergilla can be grown in any soil except those that are excessively drained. Plants suffer in extended drought, especially in full sun. A clayey soil that holds moisture but drains well is ideal.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are usually serious enough to be damaging.