



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Thunbergia erecta¹

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Introduction

Thunbergia erecta is a vigorous, woody shrub from Tropical Africa that grows to about 6-feet-tall and wide (Fig. 1). This shrub has small, ovate leaves with entire margins borne opposite on thin, brown stems. The purple flowers have a yellow throat and grow to 1 1/4 inches long and may appear singly or in small clusters. These lovely, slightly fragrant blooms occur all year long, especially in the summer. This plant produces rounded seed capsules that end in a beak.

General Information

Scientific name: *Thunbergia erecta*

Pronunciation: thun-BER-jee-uh ee-RECK-tuh

Common name(s): Bush Clock Vine, King's Mantle

Family: *Acanthaceae*

Plant type: shrub

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: superior hedge; foundation; border; cascading down a wall

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Spread: 5 to 8 feet

Plant habit: round; spreading

Plant density: moderate

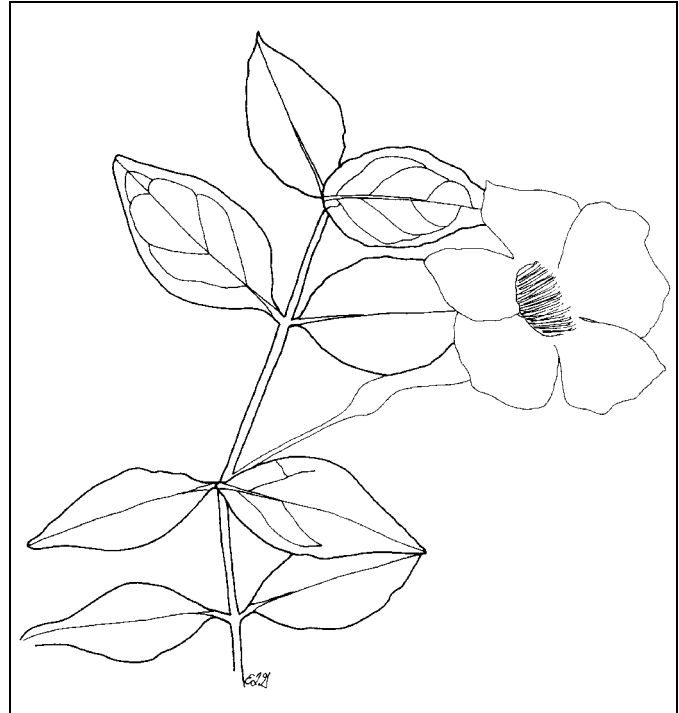


Figure 1. Bush Clock Vine.

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: bowed; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

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

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: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

The gardener can use this shrub along porches or foundations. Plants can grow without clipping if there is enough room to accommodate 5 or 6 feet of growth. Commercial landscapers often plant and maintain it as a hedge for a border. Its small foliage and continuous growth make it well suited for this purpose.

The Sweet Clock Vine should be grown in an area of the landscape that receives full sun to partial shade. It prefers well-drained soils and is moderately drought tolerant. Water this plant generously and protect it from strong winds.

Propagation is usually accomplished by cuttings or layers.

Pests and Diseases

Nematodes may be a problem for the Clock Vine.