



## *Dombeya wallichii* Pinkball<sup>1</sup>

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### 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

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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

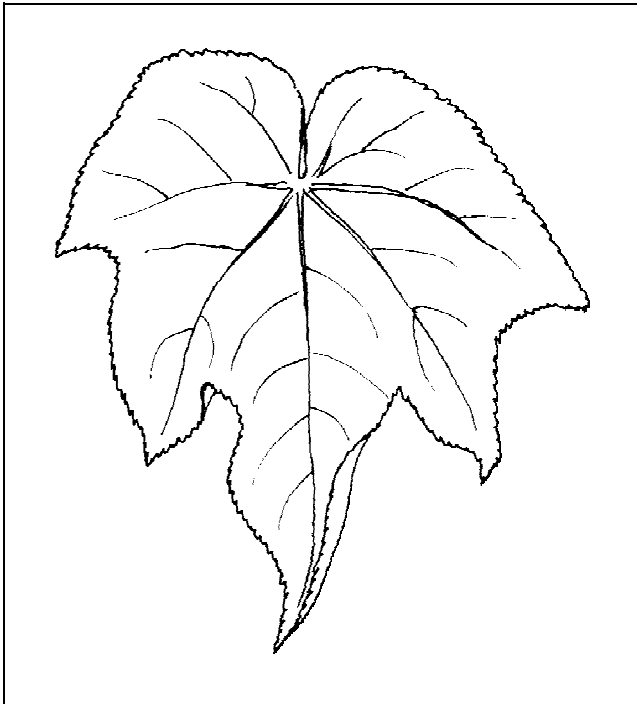
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**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.