



Photinia x fraseri Fraser Photinia¹

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INTRODUCTION

Growing 12 to 18 feet high by 8 to 12 feet wide, Fraser Photinia forms an upright silhouette of glossy, evergreen leaves (Fig. 1). One of the most striking features of Fraser Photinia is the burgundy-red new foliage which contrasts nicely against the dark green mature foliage. Most people do not see the showy white flower clusters borne at the ends of the branches in the summer because they regularly prune the new growth. It is really quite attractive in flower, as the entire crown fills with white for two or three weeks.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Photinia x fraseri*

Pronunciation: foe-TIN-nee-uh x FRAY-zer-eye

Common name(s): Fraser Photinia

Family: *Rosaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; screen; trainable as a standard; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

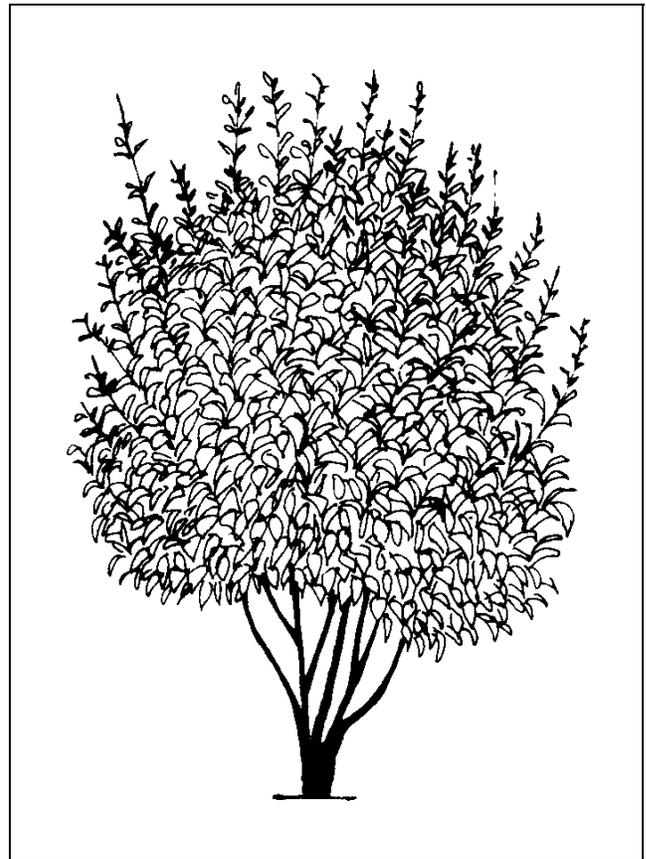


Figure 1. Middle-aged Fraser Photinia.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 12 to 18 feet

Spread: 8 to 12 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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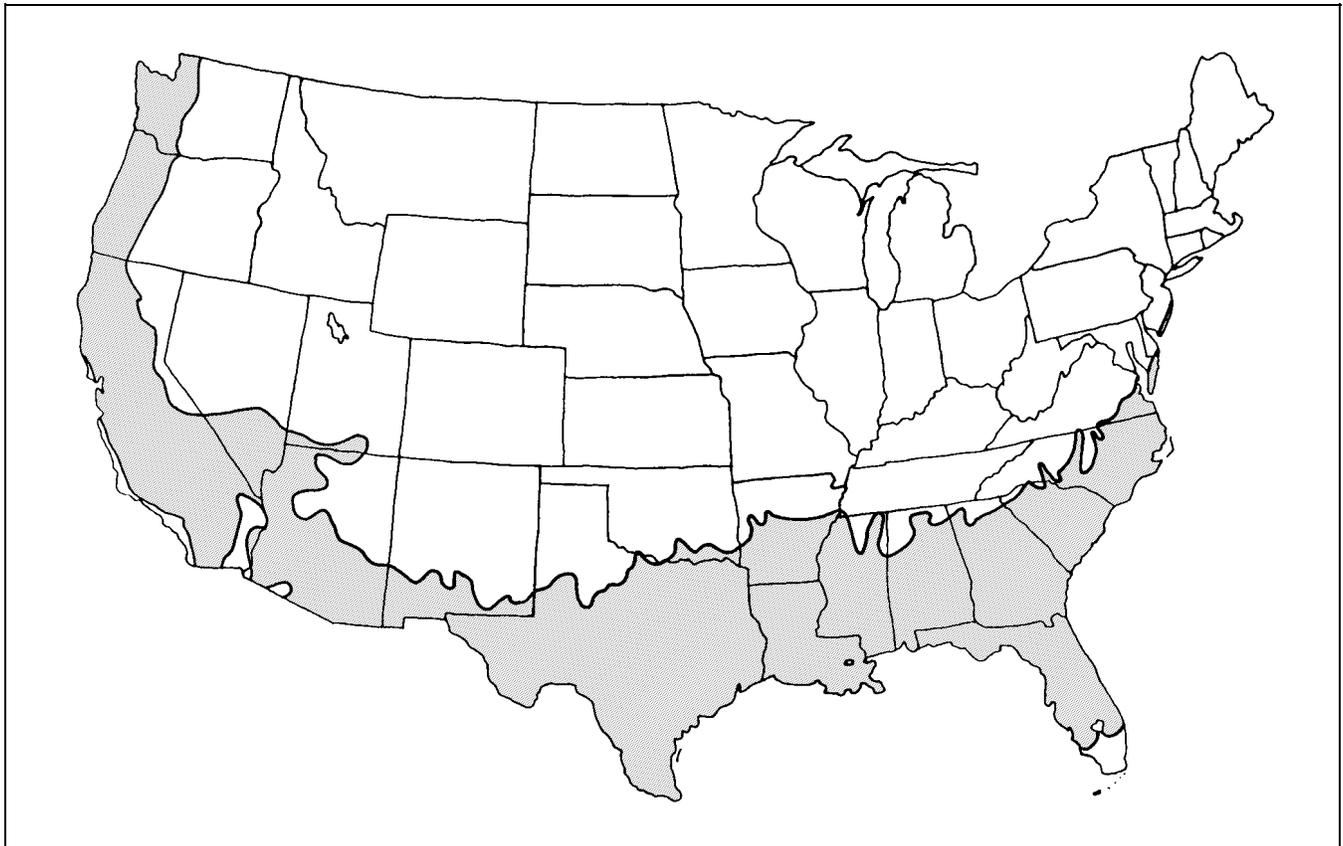


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: oval; upright

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green; purple or red

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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: reddish

Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

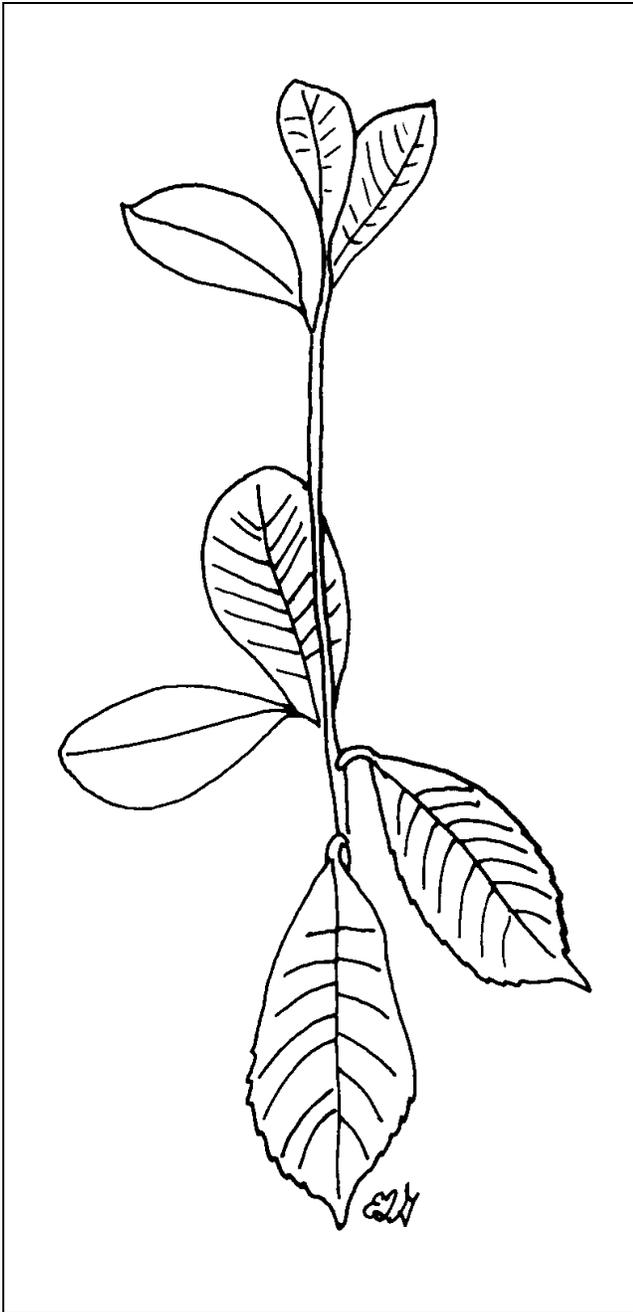


Figure 3. Foliage of Fraser Photinia.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerance: poor

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
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible
Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Ideal for use as a clipped hedge or screen (if you don't mind the bottom of it being on the thin side), Fraser Photinia produces some attractive new red growth all throughout the growing season in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9. Unfortunately, everyone seems to have discovered the plant and everyone has one (or many) but most people use it as a hedge. Try it as a tree for something different. It is best used as a tall screen in the full sun but is often misused as a foundation plant in front of the house. It grows fine in the shade but leaf spot is sure to follow causing defoliation and disappointment (or jubilation depending upon your persuasion).

Fraser Photinia needs well-drained soil and a full sun location. Leaves often become infected with leaf spot fungi when grown in shade or when the leaves remain too moist. Plants grow at a moderate rate and tolerate pruning very well, although the bottom of the plant often thins when clipped into a hedge. There are better plants for hedges. Micro-nutrient problems occur on alkaline soil, although plants continue to grow. It tolerates heat well and is suited for exposed sites like parking lots and median strips in highways.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

Caterpillars, mites, scales, European fruit-tip moth can be found on photinia but are often of little consequence.

Disease

Fire blight kills the plant rather quickly, leafspot diseases are very serious, and mildew. Root rot can kill plants, particularly those in wet soils. This is not a pest-free plant.