



Tabebuia impetiginosa Purple Tabebuia¹

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INTRODUCTION

This briefly deciduous tree reaches 15 to 20 feet in height and has a fairly open canopy (Fig. 1). Branching is often sparse allowing turf and other sun loving plants to grow beneath the canopy. The dark green, palmately compound, five-inch-long leaves are joined in late winter or early spring by the showy, trumpet-shaped blooms, appearing in dense, rose-pink to purple, terminal panicles. Trees will have a better form if trained to a single trunk and staked until they are six to eight feet tall, at which time they can be allowed to grow naturally.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Tabebuia impetiginosa*

Pronunciation: tab-eh-BOO-yuh

im-pet-ih-jih-NO-suh

Common name(s): Purple Tabebuia

Family: *Bignoniaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

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

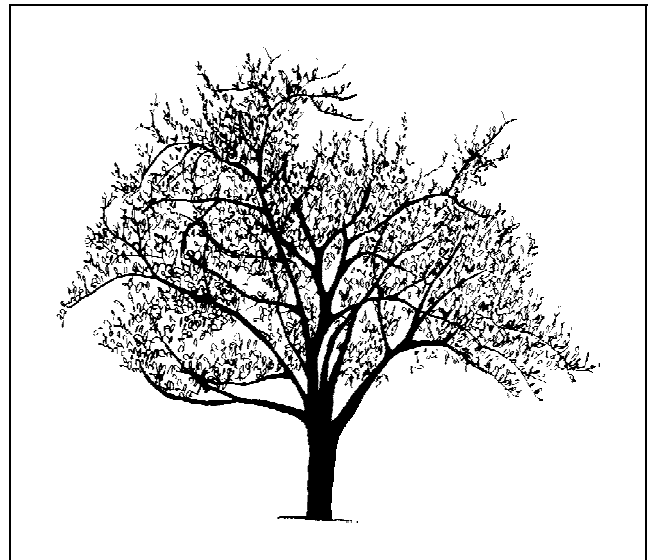


Figure 1. Middle-aged Purple Tabebuia.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 12 to 18 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaflet margin: serrate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong

Leaflet venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 6 to 12 inches; 3 to 6 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; 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: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

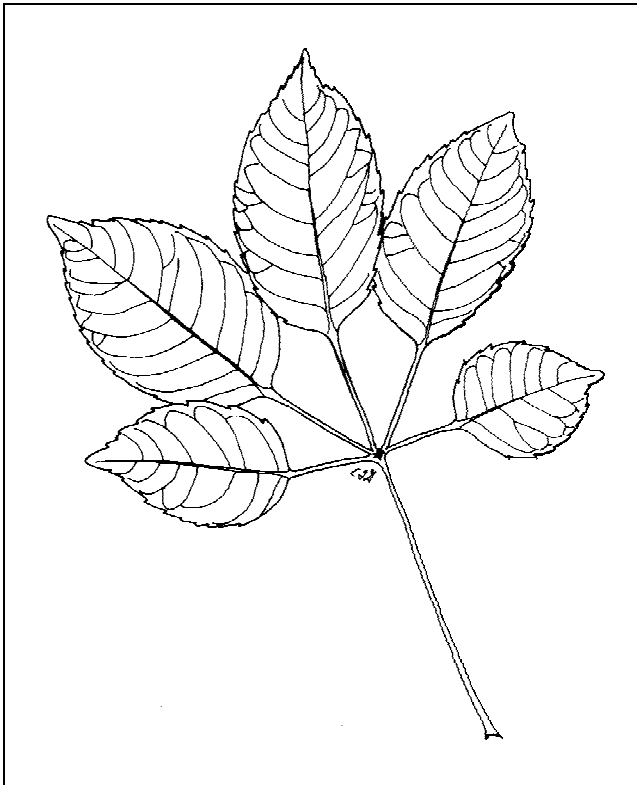


Figure 3. Foliage of Purple Tabebuia.

Pest and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Use this small tree in an area where any small tree can be used. It might be best to locate it in a shrub border or other out-of-the-way place since the canopy is quite thin, even in full sun. It is probably not as well suited for specimen planting as the other *Tabebuia*s.

Purple *Tabebuia* should be grown in full sun on almost any well-drained soil but trees respond especially well to rich soil. Established trees are highly drought-tolerant.

Propagation is by seed, cuttings, or layering. Plants flower at an early age.