

Aesculus parviflora Bottlebrush Buckeye¹

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Introduction

Native from Alabama and South Carolina into Florida, bottlebrush buckeye forms a rounded mass of dark green, palmately compound foliage in mid-spring (Figure 1). The shrub eventually reaches about 8 feet tall but grows to 12 feet wide. It can be found in its native, moist, shaded habitat flowering in early summer. The delicate, showy, white flowers are held well above the foliage in terminal panicles up to 12 inches long. Bottlebrush buckeye has been successfully used as far north as Chicago (hardiness zone 5).



Figure 1. Full form—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.
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Figure 2. Full form, fall color—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.
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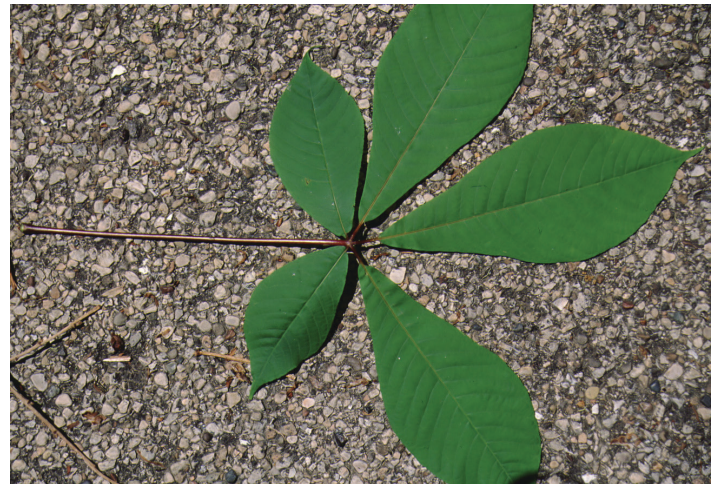


Figure 3. Leaf—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.
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Figure 4. Flower—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.
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General Information

Scientific name: *Aesculus parviflora*

Pronunciation: ESS-kew-lus par-vif-FLOR-uh

Common name(s): bottlebrush buckeye

Family: *Hippocastanaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9A (Figure 5)

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Origin: native to Florida

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: specimen; screen; foundation; border

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



Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 5 to 10 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaf margin: crenate

Leaf shape: oblong; obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: spring-flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Current year stem/twig color: gray/silver

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun; plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Allow plenty of room for this spreading shrub since it looks best without pruning. Pruning ruins the natural uniform shape. Locate it in the partial or full shade for a splash of color in early summer. Fall color is yellow, occasionally developing into a short-lived showy display.

Design Considerations

Bottlebrush buckeye works well as a background or massing plant to highlight the forms and colors of companion plants and block undesirable views. The fine texture and medium leaves of the buckeye will show well with contrasting plant features such as large leaves, coarse texture, thick stems, and dark green or burgundy color. Other contrasting textures include thin blades and clumping, arching forms of grasses and other vase-shaped, small-leaved shrubs. Contrasting size and shape such as low-growing groundcover with a sprawling, mounding form will emphasize the upright, arching shape of buckeye. To create large plant masses select plants with similar characteristics that blend with the buckeye.

Pests and Diseases

Few problems are reported on this nice, native plant.