

***Bauhinia punctata* Red Bauhinia¹**

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Introduction

Red Bauhinia (formerly) is a dense, semi-climbing, evergreen shrub with deeply-cleft, 2-lobed leaves that resemble the hooves of cattle (Fig. 1). The flowers of this sprawling plant are orchid-like in appearance, brick-red in color, and borne in few flowered racemes. The 1 1/2-inch-wide flowers of Red Bauhinia occur in the spring and summer and put on quite a show if the plant is trained on a trellis. The fruits are 5-inch long pods that appear in the late summer, and these may be a litter problem.

General Information

Scientific name: *Bauhinia punctata*

Pronunciation: baw-HIN-ee-uh punk-TAY-tuh

Common name(s): Red Bauhinia, Nasturtium Bauhinia

Family: *Leguminosae*

Plant type: shrub; vine

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)



Figure 1. Red Bauhinia.

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: specimen; espalier; hanging basket; border; ground cover

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: 6 to 15 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed

Leaf shape: oblong

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

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: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: moderate

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Red Bauhinia is nice in the landscape as an espalier, specimen, border, ground cover, and container plant. It climbs a fence nicely producing most of the flowers near the top. It is a bit asymmetrical, perhaps even unkempt looking making it best suited for the large-scale landscape planting.

Red Bauhinia requires a location in the landscape in which it receives full sun and grows best on a well-drained, sandy loam soil. It often suffers from a deficiency of micronutrients in soil with a pH above 7. Preventive fertilizer applications help keep the foliage green. This plant requires little maintenance once it is established but may need early spring pruning or shaping for growth control.

Bauhinia is propagated by seeds or cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Chewing insects may mar the foliage.