**Fothergilla major** Large Fothergilla

Edward F. Gilman

**Introduction**

This 6- to 10-feet tall shrub covers itself with soft, white flowers each spring before leaves emerge (Fig. 1). It appears to be covered with snow when in full bloom. Bright red, orange or yellow fall color bring the shrub back to life before leaves fall to the ground.

**General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Fothergilla major*  
**Pronunciation:** faw-thur-GIL-luh MAY-jur  
**Common name(s):** Large Fothergilla  
**Family:** Hamamelidaceae  
**Plant type:** shrub  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)  
**Planting month for zone 7:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 8:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round  
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round  

**Figure 1.** Large Fothergilla  

**Origin:** native to North America  
**Uses:** accent; border; mass planting  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

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Description

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Height: 6 to 10 feet
Spread: 6 to 10 feet
Plant habit: round
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: dentate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate; orbiculate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red; yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: black
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk and Branches</th>
<th>Pests and Diseases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trunk/bark/branches:</strong> not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems</td>
<td>No pests or diseases are usually serious enough to be damaging.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current year stem/twig color:</strong> brown</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current year stem/twig thickness:</strong> thin</td>
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**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; loam; clay; sand;

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

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

**Invasive potential:** native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes

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

**Use and Management**

The rounded form and large size makes this most appropriate for planting in a larger yard, away from the house. Use it in a shrub border to spice up the yard in spring and fall. Plant it near the corner of a large commercial building and leave it unpruned to allow the natural rounded form to emerge. Clipping the plant can reduce flowering so locate it where it can grow to its natural size.

Fothergilla can be grown in any soil except those that are excessively drained. Plants suffer in extended drought, especially in full sun. A clayey soil that holds moisture but drains well is ideal.