

***Fothergilla major* Large Fothergilla¹**

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

This 6- to 10-foot 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

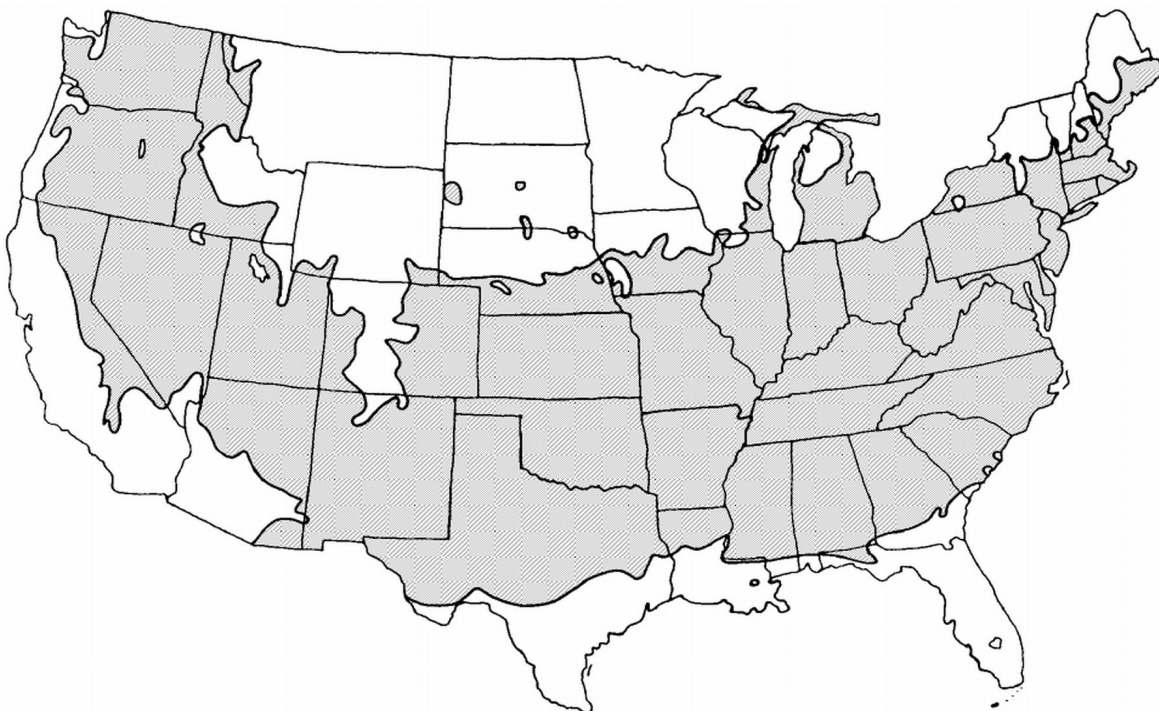


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

Trunk and Branches

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

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are usually serious enough to be damaging.

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.