

# *Abelia x grandiflora* 'Edward Goucher' Edward Goucher Glossy Abelia<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Glossy abelia is a fine-textured, semi-evergreen, sprawling shrub with 1.5-inch-long, red-tinged leaves arranged along thin, arching, multiple stems (Fig. 1). It is a hybrid between *A. chinensis* and *A. uniflora*. It stands out from other plants because the leaves retain the reddish foliage all summer long, whereas many plants with reddish leaves lose this coloration later in the summer. Considered to be evergreen in its southern range, glossy abelia will lose 50% of its leaves in colder climates, the remaining leaves taking on a more pronounced red color. Reaching a height of 6 to 10 feet with a spread of 6 feet, the gently rounded form of glossy abelia is clothed from spring through fall with terminal clusters of delicate pink and white, small, tubular flowers. Multiple stems arise from the ground in a vase shape, spreading apart as they ascend into the foliage.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Abelia x grandiflora* 'Edward Goucher'

**Pronunciation:** uh-BEEL-ee-uh gran-dif-FLOR-uh

**Common name(s):** 'Edward Goucher' glossy abelia

**Family:** *Caprifoliaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 9 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round



Figure 1. 'Edward Goucher' glossy abelia.

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter; superior hedge; specimen; screen; attracts butterflies; cascading down a wall

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

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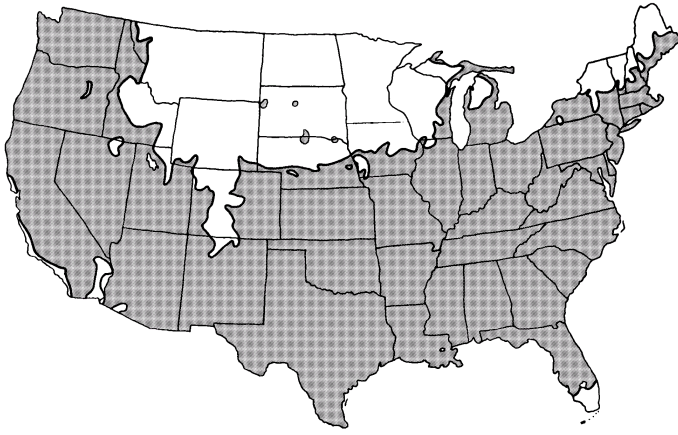


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 6 to 8 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 8 feet

**Plant habit:** vase shape; round; upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** whorled

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** purple or red

**Fall color:** purple

**Fall characteristic:** showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** lavender

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering; pleasant fragrance

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** less than 0.5 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** tan

**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:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

## Culture

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

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerance:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

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

## Use and Management

Glossy abelia grows in an upright-spreading vase shape if left unpruned, with numerous thin stems arising from the ground. Stems eventually branch near their tips forming a shrub with a full top and a thin bottom. The cascading nature of glossy abelia makes it ideal for use as a specimen, foundation plant, or shrub border. It also can be planted along a steep bank for erosion control, or it can be clipped into a hedge. Be sure that the top of the hedge is clipped narrower than the bottom to allow adequate light to reach the bottom foliage. This will help keep the plant full all the way to the ground.

Foliage arises maroon fading to dark green, lending a reddish cast to the plant during active growth. The small powderpuff-pink flowers add color continuously during the warm months. Blooming on new growth in the summer, glossy abelia benefits from springtime pruning and will require occasional thinning to keep it in bounds as a hedge. Thinning will help light reach the interior foliage stimulating branching and creating a fuller plant.

Glossy abelia enjoys fairly rich, moist but well-drained soil in a full sun or lightly shaded location and has good drought tolerance. Plants become thin and unattractive in the shade and do not flower. Plant on 4- to 6-foot centers to form a screen or foundation planting, slightly closer for a hedge. The foliage darkens during the winter, but plants generally remain full all during the cold months.

Cultivars include: 'Confetti' - cream-variegated foliage, cream colored area turns reddish in cool weather, evergreen to about 10 degrees; 'Francis Mason' - new green foliage changes to glossy yellow as it matures, color more

noticeable in full sun, light pink flowers, 3 to 4 feet high; 'Prostrata' - prostrate growth habit, white flowers, sometimes used as a ground cover; and 'Sherwoodii' - dwarf, to 3 feet, somewhat smaller leaves and flowers. *Abelia* 'Edward Goucher', a hybrid between *Abelia* x *grandiflora* and *Abelia schumannii*, has abundant lavenderpink flowers and showy red calyces, reaches 5 to 8 feet, and is best used in USDA hardiness zone 6 and south. It is superior to most other abelia due to the highly fragrant pink flowers.

Propagation is by cuttings of long, leafless, hardwood stems taken in November to January.

## **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern, but plant is occasionally bothered by aphids.