

# *Bauhinia variegata* 'Candida': 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The fast-growing White Orchid-Tree grows 20 to 40 feet in height with a 20 to 30-foot-spread, the slender trunks topped with arching branches clothed in large, two-lobed, deciduous leaves. In fall, before the leaves drop, white orchid-tree is festooned with many showy and delightfully fragrant, five-inch-wide, pure white, orchid-shaped blossoms. These flowers appear on the trees from January to April and are a beautiful sight to see. The flowers are followed by 12-inch-long, slender, brown, flat seedpods which usually persist on the tree throughout the winter. This spectacular display makes orchid-tree a favorite for specimen and street-tree plantings.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Bauhinia variegata*

**Pronunciation:** bah-HIN-ee-uh vair-ee-eh-GAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree

**Family:** *Leguminosae*

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** According to the IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (Fox *et al.* 2005), *Bauhinia variegata Candida* ('Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree) is: invasive and not recommended for use in the southern zone of Florida (counties are listed by zone at: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment>); may

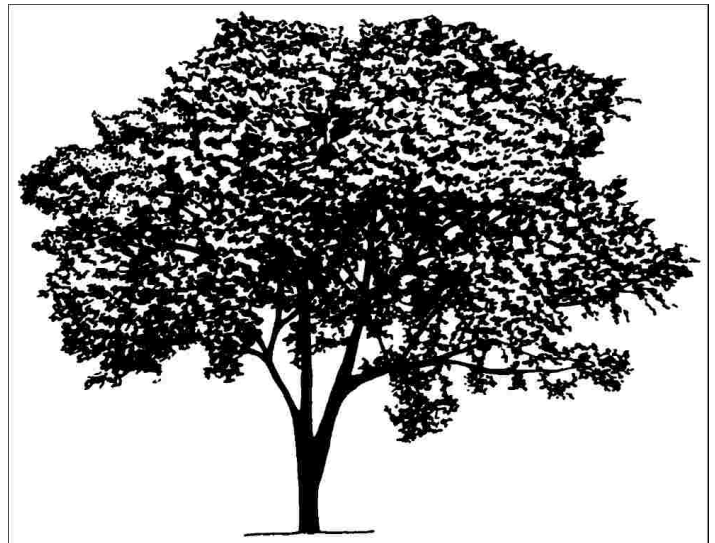


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Bauhinia variegata* 'Candida': 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree

be used with caution in central Florida, but should be managed to prevent its escape<sup>1</sup>; and it is not considered a problem species and may be used in North Florida.

<sup>1</sup>Current assessment is incomplete; please check for updated information at: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment>

**Uses:** reclamation; street without sidewalk; deck or patio; shade; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median; specimen

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**Availability:** not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

## Description

**Height:** 20 to 35 feet

**Spread:** 20 to 30 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular

**Crown shape:** vase

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** cleft, lobed

**Leaf shape:** orbiculate

**Leaf venation:** palmate

**Leaf type and persistence:** semi-evergreen, deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white/cream/gray

**Flower characteristics:** very showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated, pod or pod-like

**Fruit length:** 12 inches or more

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** black

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; can be trained to one trunk; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** thin, medium

**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** yes

**Outstanding tree:** no

**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown

**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

## Use and Management

White Orchid-Tree should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. Trees are very drought-tolerant and actually flower best on dry soils. Problems include a tendency to show nutritional deficiencies, especially potassium; the weak wood which is susceptible to breakage in storms; the abundant seedlings which may germinate in the landscape; and the litter problem created by the falling leaves, flowers, and seedpods. Orchid-tree may need occasional pruning to develop a uniform shape when it is young. Branches tend to develop low on the trunk and droop toward the ground forming a large bush if left unpruned. Occasional pruning during the life of the tree will help maintain a nice, neat appearance.

## Pests

Caterpillars, mites, borers.

## Diseases

Leaf spot, leaf scorch, mushroom root rot diseases.