

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

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Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### **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



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

1. This document is ENH251, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date November 1993. Revised April 2007. Visit the EDIS Web Site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

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 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

**Availability:** not native to North America

**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



Figure 2. Range

**Description**

**Height:** 20 to 35 feet

**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.