**Callistemon viminalis** ‘Red Cascade’: ‘Red Cascade’ Weeping Bottlebrush

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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**Introduction**

This popular evergreen tree has a dense, multi-trunked, low-branching, pendulous growth habit and a moderate growth rate. Mature specimens can reach 25- to 30-feet tall in 30 years, but most trees are seen 15- to 20-feet high and wide. The narrow, light green, 3- to 4-inch-long leaves tend to grow only at the ends of the long, hanging branches, creating a weeping effect. The cylindrical, bright scarlet blooms, several inches long and 1.5-inches wide, are composed of multiple, long, bristlelike stamens. Flowers are larger than the species. These blooms appear in great abundance March through July, less so throughout the year. The flowers are followed by persistent woody capsules that are not noticed unless you are close to the tree.

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**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Callistemon viminalis
- **Pronunciation:** kal-liss-STEE-mawn vim-min-NAY-liss
- **Common name(s):** ‘Red Cascade’ weeping bottlebrush
- **Family:** Myrtaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Uses:** hedge; deck or patio; specimen; screen; container or planter; street without sidewalk; 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
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

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**Description**

- **Height:** 15 to 20 feet
- **Spread:** 15 to 20 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular
- **Crown shape:** weeping, round
- **Crown density:** open
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** lanceolate, linear
- **Leaf venation:** parallel
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** no color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** red
- **Flower characteristics:** very showy

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** round
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** brown
- **Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant
**Current year twig color:** gray
**Current year twig thickness:** medium
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** sand; loam; clay; acidic; slightly alkaline; well drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**

- **Roots:** not a problem
- **Winter interest:** no
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant
- **Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Weeping bottlebrushes should be grown in full sun, preferably on moist, well drained soil. Although they can tolerate some drought, best flowering and growth is obtained with ample moisture and regular fertilization. Be sure the soil drains well, as roots often rot in wet soil. The brittle wood of weeping bottlebrush may make it unsuitable for windy areas, but this is usually not a problem in most locations. They are not suitable for street tree planting due to the weeping growth habit, but will make nice plantings along streets in wide medians. Lower branches can be removed so cars can fit beneath in parking lots, where the trees grow well in the restricted soil space. Occasional pruning of pendulous branches will be required for vehicle clearance. One of the best uses is for lawn specimens, or screens on large properties, with a regular maintenance program.

*Callistemon citrinis* and *Callistemon rigidus* are hardy in the southern part of USDA hardiness zone 8b.

Propagation is by cuttings.

**Pests**

Mites and witches broom can be troublesome.

**Diseases**

Root rot in wet soil, and canker. A twig gall, formed in response to a fungus (*Sphaeropsis tumefacens*), can disfigure the tree. The tree is often short-lived due to disease.