

Cotinus coggygia 'Royal Purple': 'Royal Purple' Smoketree¹

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Introduction

This slow growing, open-crown, round, small tree eventually reaches to 12 to 15 feet tall (occasionally 20) and 10 to 12 feet wide. The large panicles of wispy purple-colored flowers produced in spring and early summer give the effect of a cloud of smoke. They make a wonderful accent in a shrub border and can be planted as a specimen or as a patio tree where the black, showy, multiple trunk can be displayed. Planting smoketree is a good way to extend the spring flowering-tree season into the summer before the Crape-Myrtles come into full bloom. This cultivar has deep purple leaves which keep their color all summer long. Fall color is usually a rich red-purple. Many people grow it simply to enjoy the spectacular fall color.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cotinus coggygia*

Pronunciation: koe-TYE-nus koe-GUY-gree-uh

Common name(s): 'Royal Purple' Smoketree, 'Royal Purple' Wig-Tree, 'Royal Purple' Smokebush

Family: *Anacardiaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: specimen; deck or patio; street without sidewalk; container or planter; reclamation; trained as a standard; screen; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island

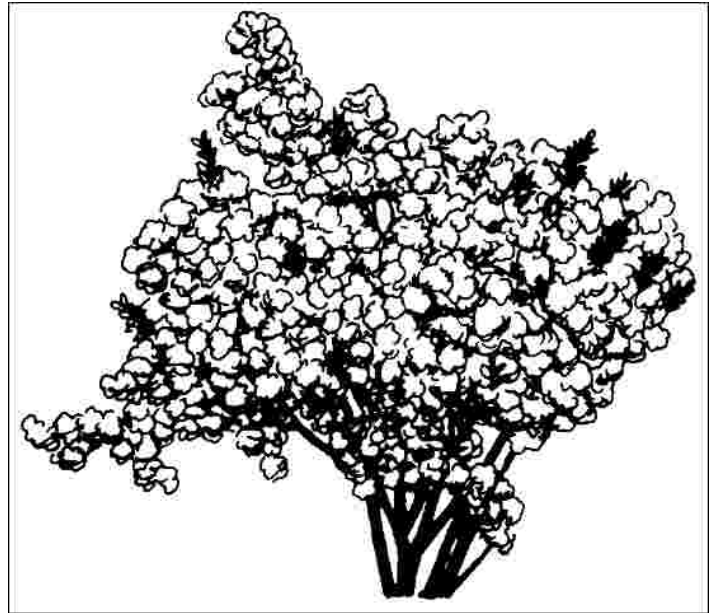


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Cotinus coggygia* 'Royal Purple': 'Royal Purple' Smoketree

100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 12 to 15 feet

Spread: 10 to 18 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

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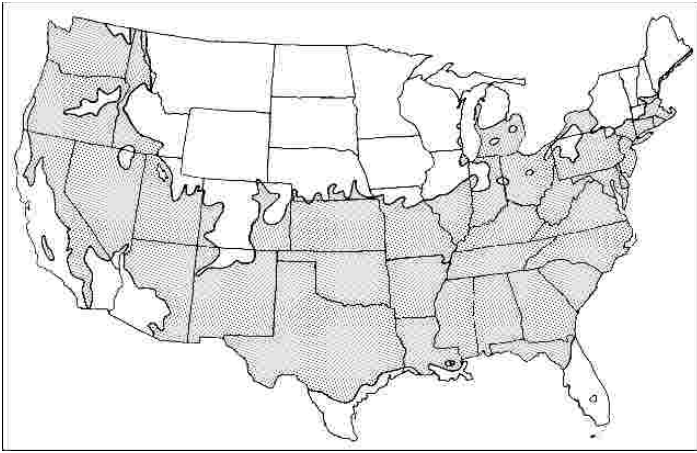


Figure 2. Range

Crown shape: round
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: obovate, elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: reticulate, pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: purple/red
Fall color: red, purple
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: red, purple
Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

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

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium, thick
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

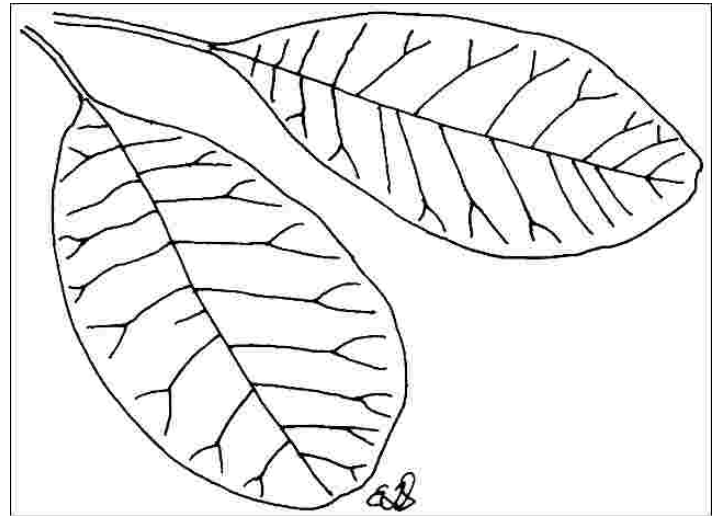


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

The tree is tough and adapts to restricted soil spaces. It could be used along a street under power lines and would not require pruning for many years. It is a small tree, well-adapted to urban areas with almost year-round interest which should be used more in our landscapes.

Smoketree grows best in a sunny location and a well-drained loam. It will grow asymmetrically and lean toward the light in a partially sunny area, so it is best to locate it in full day sun where the crown will develop symmetrically. Though sometimes short-lived in rich soil, Smoketree is useful in dry, rocky soil where there is no irrigation. It also grows in a wide range of soil pH, including alkaline. Probably short-lived (20 years - maybe more) in most situations but who cares - the tree is great while it's around!

Propagation of cultivars is by cuttings.

Cultivars include: 'Daydream' - heavy production of panicles, dense habit of growth; 'Flame' - brilliant orange-red fall color, pink inflorescences; 'Nordine' - resembles 'Royal Purple'; 'Notcutt's Variety' - dark maroon-purple leaves (also known as 'Foliis Purpureis Notcutt's Variety' and 'Rubrifolius'); 'Purpureus' - leaves bronze-green, inflorescences purplish-pink; 'Pendulus' - pendulous branches; and 'Velvet Cloak' - dark purple-leaf form, spectacular fall color of reddish-purple.

Pests

Oblique-banded leaf roller mines and rolls the leaves, usually in June. The insect rarely occurs in sufficient numbers to warrant control. When it does occur they can be picked off by hand or sprayed with *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

Diseases

Leaf spots can be caused by various genera of fungi but are usually not serious.

Scab may cause leaf drop. No controls are listed.

The most serious disease is Verticillium wilt. Smoketree is very susceptible, and entire branches wilt and die. Prune out infected branches, fertilize, and water the plant during dry weather.

A stem canker can be a problem in the eastern U.S.