

Dombeya wallichii: Pinkball¹

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Introduction

Nothing could be more attention-getting than Pinkball when in full bloom. Huge, pendent clusters of tightly-packed, five to six-inch-diameter, pink flowers give much the impression of upsidedown corsages intermixed with large, coarsely-textured, light green leaves. Pinkball maintains a rounded form and can grow to 20 feet in height with an equal spread and makes a spectacular specimen planting or patio tree. It is usually grown as a shrub.



Figure 1. Mature *Dombeya wallichii*: Pinkball

General Information

Scientific name: *Dombeya wallichii*

Pronunciation: dom-BEE-yuh wall-ICK-ee-eye

Common name(s): Pinkball

Family: Sterculiaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 10A through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: shade; specimen; deck or patio

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



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

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

Spread: 20 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: round
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate, crenate
Leaf shape: cordate
Leaf venation: pinnate, palmate
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit covering: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

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

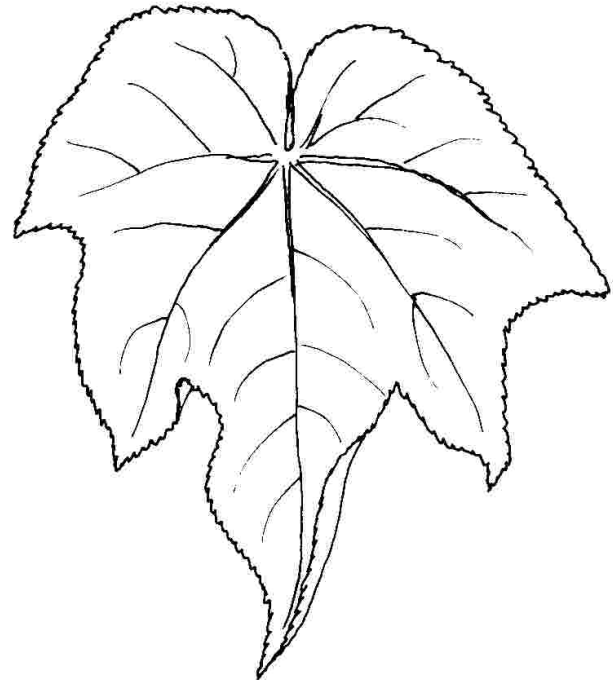


Figure 3. Foliage

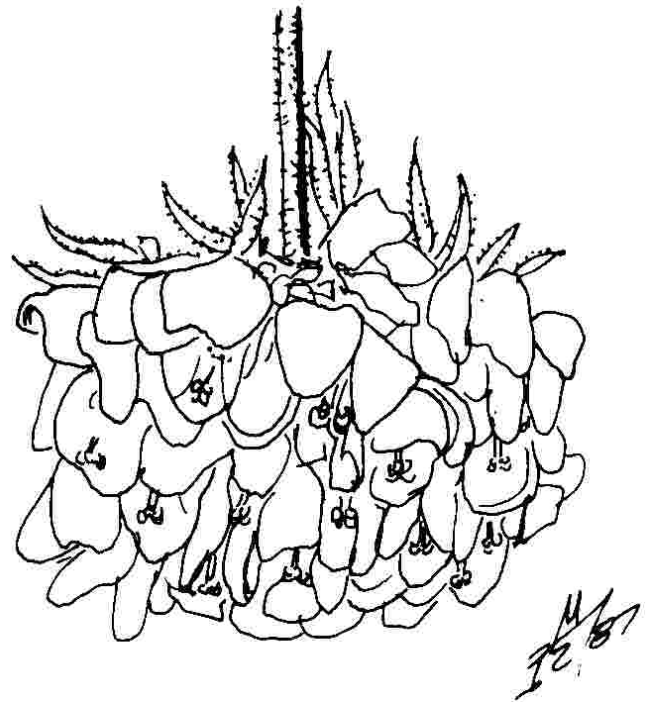


Figure 4. Flower

Use and Management

Growing rapidly in full sun to partial shade on a wide variety of soils, Pinkball needs protection from frost and is not salt-tolerant. Flower heads fall from the tree, remaining pink for a number of days. The dried flower heads will need to be cleaned up for a neat appearance beneath the tree but otherwise it is a very low-maintenance tree. Plants

can be watered until established and then forgotten except in the driest locations.

There are several hybrids available.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings which root quickly and easily.

Pests

Aphids, soft scale, nematodes, and sooty mold are minor problems for Pinkball.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.