

Photinia x fraseri: Fraser Photinia¹

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Introduction

Growing 12 to 18 feet high by 8 to 12 feet wide, Fraser Photinia forms an upright silhouette of glossy, evergreen leaves. One of the most striking features of Fraser Photinia is the burgundy-red new foliage which contrasts nicely against the dark green mature foliage. Most people do not see the showy white flower clusters borne at the ends of the branches in the summer because they regularly prune the new growth. It is really quite attractive in flower, as the entire crown fills with white for two or three weeks.

General Information

Scientific name: *Photinia x fraseri*

Pronunciation: foe-TIN-nee-uh x FRAY-zer-eye

Common name(s): Fraser Photinia

Family: *Rosaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 9B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: sidewalk cutout (tree pit); hedge; screen; container or planter; trained as a standard; deck or patio; urban tolerant; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 12 to 18 feet

Spread: 8 to 12 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: upright/erect, oval

Crown density: dense

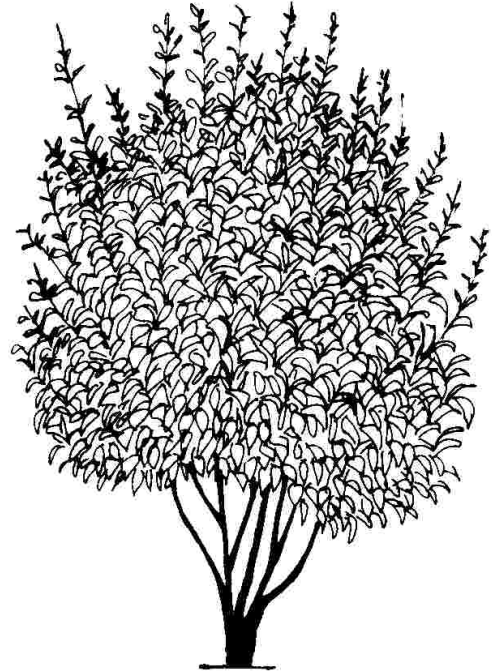


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Photinia x fraseri*: Fraser Photinia

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: obovate, elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

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Figure 2. Range

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen, broadleaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green, purple/red

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: red

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 multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: reddish

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

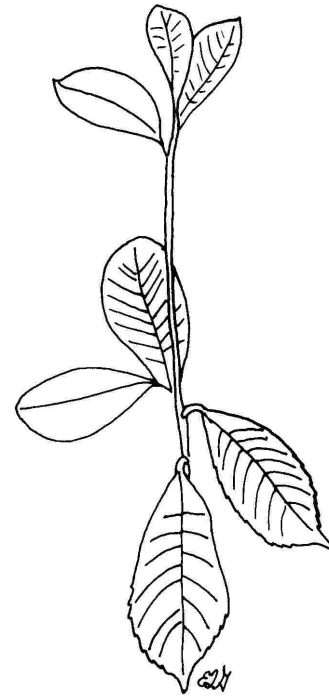


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

Ideal for use as a clipped hedge or screen (if you don't mind the bottom of it being on the thin side), Fraser Photinia produces some attractive new red growth all throughout the growing season in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9. Unfortunately, everyone seems to have discovered the plant and everyone has one (or many) but most people use it as a hedge. Try it as a tree for something different. It is best used as a tall screen in the full sun but is often misused as a foundation plant in front of the house. It grows fine in the shade but leaf spot is sure to follow causing defoliation and disappointment (or jubilation depending upon your persuasion).

Fraser Photinia needs well-drained soil and a full sun location. Leaves often become infected with leaf spot fungi when grown in shade or when the leaves remain too moist. Plants grow at a moderate rate and tolerate pruning very well, although the bottom of the plant often thins when clipped into a hedge. There are better plants for hedges. Micro-nutrient problems occur on alkaline soil, although plants continue to grow. It tolerates heat well and is suited

for exposed sites like parking lots and median strips in highways.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests

Caterpillars, mites, scales, European fruit-tip moth can be found on photinia but are often of little consequence.

Disease

Fire blight kills the plant rather quickly, leafspot diseases are very serious, and mildew. Root rot can kill plants, particularly those in wet soils. This is not a pest-free plant.