**Introduction**

Red bauhinia is a dense, semi-climbing, evergreen shrub with deeply-cleft, 2-lobed leaves that resemble the hooves of cattle (Fig. 1). The flowers of this sprawling plant are orchid-like in appearance, brick-red in color, and borne in few flowered racemes. The 1 1/2-inch-wide flowers of red bauhinia occur in the spring and summer and put on quite a show if the plant is trained on a trellis. The fruits are 5-inch-long pods that appear in the late summer, and these may be a litter problem.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Bauhinia punctata
- **Pronunciation:** baw-HIN-ee-uh punk-TAY-tuh
- **Common name(s):** Red bauhinia, nasturtium bauhinia
- **Family:** Leguminosae
- **Plant type:** shrub; vine

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
**Planting month for zone 9:** year round
**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round
**Origin:** not native to North America
**Uses:** specimen; espalier; hanging basket; border; ground cover
**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**Description**

- **Height:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Spread:** 6 to 15 feet
- **Plant habit:** spreading
- **Plant density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** medium

Figure 1. Red bauhinia.

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: lobed  
Leaf shape: oblong  
Leaf venation: palmate  
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: no fall color change  
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**

Flower color: red  
Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like  
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches  
Fruit cover: dry or hard  
Fruit color: brown  
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy  
Current year stem/twig color: brown  
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

**Culture**

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun  
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;  
Drought tolerance: high  
Soil salt tolerances: moderate  
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

Roots: usually not a problem  
Winter interest: no special winter interest  
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding  
Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant  
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**

Red bauhinia is nice in the landscape as an espalier, specimen, border, ground cover, and container plant. It climbs a fence nicely, producing most of the flowers near the top.

It is a bit asymmetrical, perhaps even unkempt looking making it best suited for the large-scale landscape planting.

Red bauhinia requires a location in the landscape in which it receives full sun and grows best on a well-drained, sandy loam soil. It often suffers from a deficiency of micronutrients in soil with a pH above 7. Preventive fertilizer applications help keep the foliage green. This plant requires little maintenance once it is established but may need early spring pruning or shaping for growth control.

*Bauhinia* is propagated by seeds or cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**

Chewing insects may mar the foliage.