Calliandra surinamensis: Pink Powderpuff

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Introduction
This large, multiple-trunked, low-branching, evergreen shrub has silky leaflets that are glossy copper when new, turning to a dark metallic green. The profuse, fragrant bloom is the main reason for its popularity, with big puffs, two to three inches across, of watermelon pink and white silky stamens, produced during warm months.

General Information
Scientific name: Calliandra surinamensis
Pronunciation: kal-ee-AN-druh ser-ih-nuh-MEN-sis
Common name(s): Pink powderpuff
Family: Leguminosae
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America
Uses: hedge; specimen; deck or patio; container or planter; trained as a standard; espalier; highway median
Availability: not native to North America

Description
Height: 12 to 15 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular
Crown shape: vase, round
Crown density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

Figure 1. Middle-aged Calliandra surinamensis: Pink Powderpuff

Figure 2. Range
**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** bipinnately compound, even-pinnately compound
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** oblong
- **Leaf venation:** parallel, bowed, pinnate
- **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:** pink
- **Flower characteristics:** showy

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** pod or pod-like
- **Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches
- **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:** green, gray, brown
- **Current year twig thickness:** thin, medium
- **Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun or partial shade

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

**Other**
- **Roots:** not a problem
- **Winter interest:** yes
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Invasive potential:** invasive non-native
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown
- **Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**
With rapid growth in sandy soils and full sun, powderpuff bush will respond favorably to regular watering while young but should require no special care once established, except an occasional pruning to keep it within bounds. Pinching new growth increases the number of branches and enhances flower display. Powderpuff bush may be used as a tall (5- to 6-foot) flowering hedge and is often seen as a small, flowering specimen tree with the lower branches pruned off. Powderpuff can grow to about 15 feet tall when pruned into a small tree. The long, arching branches form an attractive canopy suitable for patio or container plantings.

Although plants are damaged by freezing temperatures, they grow back from the base in the spring in USDA hardiness zone 9.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

**Pests**
While usually pest free, powderpuff bush can be occasionally infested by mites, caterpillars, or other chewing insects.

**Diseases**
No diseases are of major concern.