**Stewartia monadelpha**: Tall Stewartia

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**Introduction**
Tall stewartia grows 20 to 25 feet in height in as many years though it has been known to reach 80 feet, its young pyramidal crown maturing into an open, multi-trunked form with somewhat horizontal branches. The 1.5- to 2.5-inch-long dark green leaves cast light shade below this deciduous tree, and cling well into the fall after changing to an attractive deep red. In June the small, white, cupped flowers appear, opening over a four-week period but are not particularly striking. The smooth cinnamon-brown bark is outstanding and help to make tall stewartia quite striking in the winter landscape.

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**General Information**
- **Scientific name**: *Stewartia monadelpha*
- **Pronunciation**: stoo-AR-tee-uh mawn-uh-DELL-fuh
- **Common name(s)**: Tall stewartia
- **Family**: Theaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones**: 6B 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; espalier; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median
- **Availability**: not native to North America

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Figure 1. Middle-aged *Stewartia monadelpha*: tall stewartia
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

Figure 2. Range
**Description**

**Height:** 20 to 25 feet  
**Spread:** 15 to 25 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical  
**Crown shape:** pyramidal, vase  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** serrate  
**Leaf shape:** ovate, elliptic (oval)  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate, brachidodrome  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** red  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white/cream/gray  
**Flower characteristics:** showy

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval, round  
**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**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; very showy; can be trained to one trunk; thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** little required  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** green, gray  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun, or partial shade  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

**Other**

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** yes  
**Outstanding tree:** yes  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown  
**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

This tree can be used in much the same way as Japanese stewartia. It is unsurpassed as a specimen, but can also be included in a shrub border, planted near a patio or deck to show off the wonderful bark, or used as a multi-trunked street tree planted on 20-foot centers. Set it off as a specimen by placing it in a bed of low, evergreen ground cover.

Best when grown in partial shade in USDA hardiness zone 8b, tall stewartia can tolerate a full sun position if its roots can be shaded by ground cover, mulch or shrubbery. This may be the best *Stewartia* species for the deep south. *Stewartia monadelpha* is a native species well-suited for the deep south. Well-drained, acid to neutral soil is best.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern, and this tree should be grown and planted more often.