

# Callicarpa dichotoma Purple Beautyberry<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

Perhaps the most beautiful beautyberry, this species of *Callicarpa* has smaller leaves than either the more common American beautyberry or Japanese beautyberry (Fig. 1). Leaves are produced closer together on the stem forming a smaller, more compact shrub. Like other beautyberries, purple berries are produced in abundance in late summer and fall and persist on the plant after leaves have fallen. Berries appear consistently each year. The shrub forms the same cascading or weeping effect so common on other beautyberries.



Figure 1. Purple beautyberry.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Callicarpa dichotoma*

**Pronunciation:** kal-lick-AR-puh dye-KAWT-oh-muh

**Common name(s):** purple beautyberry

**Family:** *Verbenaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5B through 8 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; specimen; foundation; mass planting; cascading down a wall; accent

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

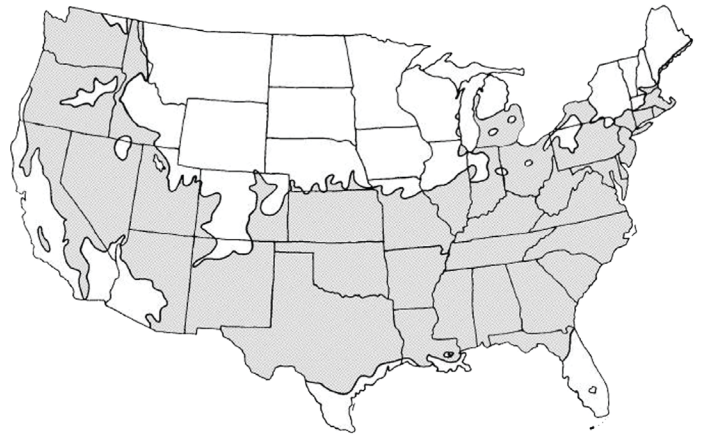


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 3 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** round; weeping

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** medium

1. This document is FPS91, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** obovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** lavender

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** purple

**Fruit characteristic:** persists on the plant

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Plants can be massed together spaced 4 to 5 feet apart forming a nice border or divider. Thick growth discourages people from walking through the plant making it well suited for controlling pedestrian traffic. Branches will droop over a wall if planted on top making it ideally suited for raised planters or containers. Whereas the native American beautyberry grows too large for many residential landscapes, this plant remains small and in scale with many yards.

Locate in the full sun or partial shade for best form and dense growth. Soils from acid to slightly alkaline should support this plant with little irrigation except in extended drought.

## Pests and Diseases

The plant has not been widely available so all potential problems are not known. Problems may be similar to the native beautyberry.