

# *Aesculus parviflora* Bottlebrush Buckeye<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Native from Alabama and South Carolina into Florida, bottlebrush buckeye forms a rounded mass of dark green, palmately compound foliage in mid-spring (Figure 1). The shrub eventually reaches about 8 feet tall but grows to 12 feet wide. It can be found in its native, moist, shaded habitat flowering in early summer. The delicate, showy, white flowers are held well above the foliage in terminal panicles up to 12 inches long. Bottlebrush buckeye has been successfully used as far north as Chicago (hardiness zone 5).



Figure 1. Full form—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.  
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Full form, fall color—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.  
Credits: UF/IFAS

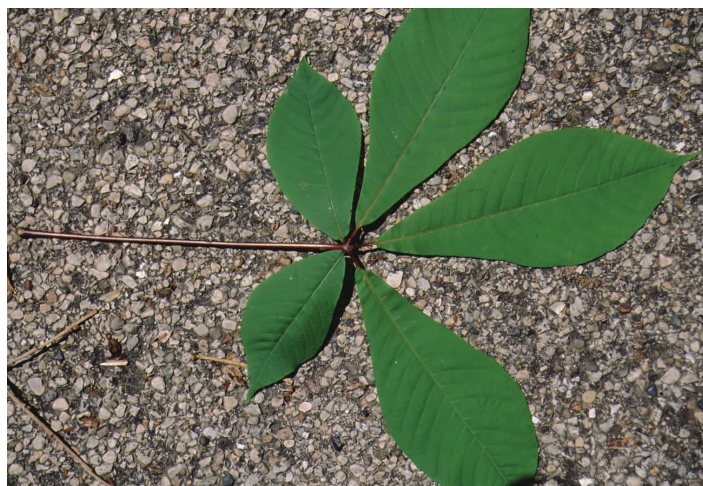


Figure 3. Leaf—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.  
Credits: UF/IFAS

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Figure 4. Flower—*Aesculus parviflora*: bottlebrush buckeye.  
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Aesculus parviflora*

**Pronunciation:** ESS-kew-lus par-vif-FLOR-uh

**Common name(s):** bottlebrush buckeye

**Family:** *Hippocastanaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 9A (Figure 5)

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

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

**Planting month for zone 9:** year-round

**Origin:** native to Florida

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

**Uses:** specimen; screen; foundation; border

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



Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 5 to 10 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 15 feet

**Plant habit:** round

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** palmately compound

**Leaf margin:** crenate

**Leaf shape:** oblong; obovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristic:** spring-flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** showy

## Trunk and Branches

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

**Current year stem/twig color:** gray/silver

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

## Culture

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

**Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; acidic; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** poor

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** sprouts from roots or lower trunk

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

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

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

## Use and Management

Allow plenty of room for this spreading shrub since it looks best without pruning. Pruning ruins the natural uniform shape. Locate it in the partial or full shade for a splash of color in early summer. Fall color is yellow, occasionally developing into a short-lived showy display.

## Design Considerations

Bottlebrush buckeye works well as a background or massing plant to highlight the forms and colors of companion plants and block undesirable views. The fine texture and medium leaves of the buckeye will show well with contrasting plant features such as large leaves, coarse texture, thick stems, and dark green or burgundy color. Other contrasting textures include thin blades and clumping, arching forms of grasses and other vase-shaped, small-leaved shrubs. Contrasting size and shape such as low-growing groundcover with a sprawling, mounding form will emphasize the upright, arching shape of buckeye. To create large plant masses select plants with similar characteristics that blend with the buckeye.

## Pests and Diseases

Few problems are reported on this nice, native plant.