

# Fothergilla major Large Fothergilla, Mountain Witchalder<sup>1</sup>

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# Introduction

These 6- to 10-feet-tall shrub covers itself with soft, white flowers each spring before leaves emerge. It appears to be covered with snow when in full bloom. Bright red, orange, or yellow fall color bring the shrub back to life before leaves fall to the ground.

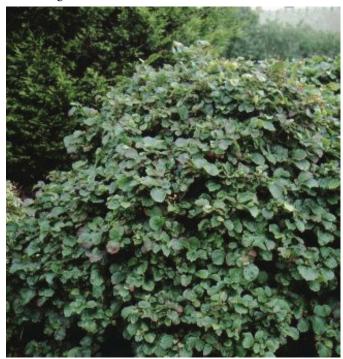


Figure 1. Full Form—*Fothergilla major*: Large fothergilla, mountain witchalder.
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—Fothergilla major: Large fothergilla, mountain witchalder.

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Figure 3. Leaf, Fall Color—*Fothergilla major*: Large fothergilla, mountain witchalder. Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

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Figure 4. Flower—Fothergilla major: Large fothergilla, mountain witchalder.

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## **General Information**

**Scientific name:** Fothergilla major

Pronunciation: faw-thur-GIL-luh MAY-jur

**Common name(s):** large fothergilla

**Family:** Hamamelidaceae

Plant type: shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Figure 5)

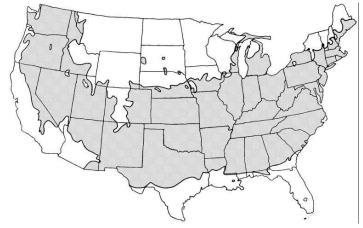


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: native to North America

**Invasive potential:** native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes

Uses: accent; border; mass planting

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

## **Description**

**Height:** 6 to 10 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 10 feet

Plant habit: round

**Plant density:** dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

## **Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: dentate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate; orbiculate

Leaf venation: pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: red; yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

#### **Flower**

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: pleasant fragrance; spring flowering

#### Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

#### **Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically

multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: brown

Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

#### **Culture**

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; loam; clay; sand

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

#### **Other**

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## **Use and Management**

The rounded form and large size makes this most appropriate for planting in a larger yard, away from the house. Use it in a shrub border to spice up the yard in spring and fall. Plant it near the corner of a large commercial building and leave it unpruned to allow the natural rounded form to emerge. Clipping the plant can reduce flowering so locate it where it can grow to its natural size.

Fothergilla can be grown in any soil except those that are excessively drained. Plants suffer in extended drought, especially in full sun. A clayey soil that holds moisture but drains well is ideal.

#### **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are usually serious enough to be damaging.