

Nandina domestica 'Harbor Dwarf' Harbor Dwarf Nandina¹

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Introduction

'Harbor Dwarf' nandina is a dense, compact cultivar of *Nandina domestica*. It branches from the ground to form a dense mound about 18 inches in height. Dwarf nandina has smaller leaves and more branches than the species. Small, pink, or bronze, tripinnately compound, leaves emerge in spring and turn orange to red in the winter. The flowers and fruits of this cultivar are also smaller than the species and less abundant.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf': Harbor dwarf nandina.

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Figure 2. Full Form, Fall Color—*Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf': Harbor dwarf nandina.

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Figure 3. Leaf—*Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf': Harbor dwarf nandina.

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General Information

Scientific name: *Nandina domestica* 'Harbor Dwarf'

Pronunciation: nan-DEE-nuh doe-MESS-stick-kuh

Common name(s): 'Harbor Dwarf' nandina

Family: *Berberidaceae*

Plant type: ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 10 (Figure 4)

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: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not considered a problem species at this time and may be recommended by UF/IFAS faculty (reassess in 10 years)

Uses: container or above-ground planter; mass planting; ground cover; foundation; edging; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100–200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

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



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 1 to 3 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: undulate

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: purple or red

Fall color: red

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than ½ inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: rarely fruits

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: reddish

Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

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

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

Use and Management

‘Harbor Dwarf’ nandina is used in the landscape as an attractive and graceful ground cover or edging. Plant on 18- to 24-inch centers to form a thick ground cover. It is an interesting plant all year round.

Nandina domestica ‘Harbor Dwarf’ will grow well when given full sun or partial shade. It tolerates most well-drained soils and will endure periods of drought. The canes of this plant do not branch, but there are many stems originating at ground level to thicken the plant. ‘Harbor Dwarf’ nandina is commonly propagated by semi-hardwood cuttings in the fall. The largest advances in propagation are in tissue culture to produce virus free plants.

Other dwarf cultivars include ‘Compacta’—slower growing than the species with smaller leaflets, but eventually reaches 5 to 7 feet tall; ‘Nana Purpurea’—to about 18 inches tall with coarse foliage turning bright, glossy red in winter; ‘Woods Dwarf’—same as above, 18 inches tall best for the full sun.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.