

Dombeya wallichii: Pinkball¹

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Introduction

Nothing could be more attention getting than pinkball when in full bloom. Huge, pendent clusters of tightly packed, 5- to 6-inch-diameter, pink flowers give much the impression of upside-down corsages intermixed with large, coarsely textured, light green leaves. Pinkball maintains a rounded form and can grow to 20 feet in height with an equal spread and makes a spectacular specimen planting or patio tree. It is usually grown as a shrub.



Figure 1. Mature *Dombeya wallichii*: Pinkball.
Credits: Stephen Brown, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Dombeya wallichii*

Pronunciation: dom-BEE-yuh wall-ICK-ee-eye

Common name(s): Pinkball

Family: Malvaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Figure 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not assessed/incomplete assessment

Uses: shade; specimen; deck or patio

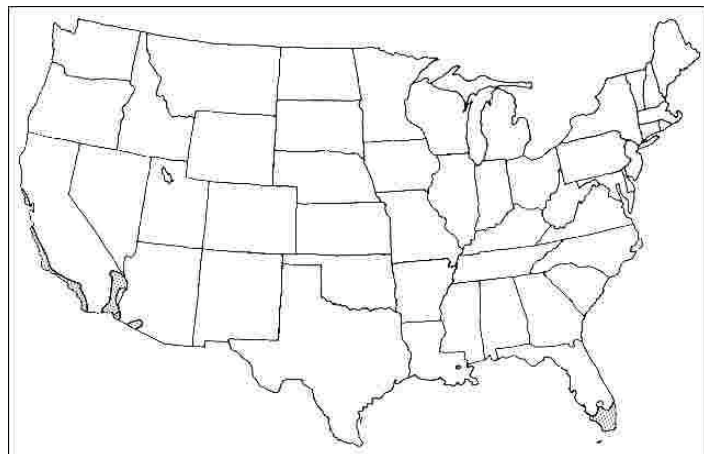


Figure 2. Range

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Description

Height: 20 to 30 feet

Spread: 20 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: round

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate, crenate

Leaf shape: cordate

Leaf venation: pinnate, palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit covering: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem



Figure 3. Flower of *Dombeya wallichii*: Pinkball

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Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage

Current year twig color: green

Current year twig thickness: medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun, or partial shade

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Growing rapidly in full sun to partial shade on a wide variety of soils, pinkball needs protection from frost and is not salt-tolerant. Flower heads fall from the tree, remaining pink for a number of days. The dried flower heads will need to be cleaned up for a neat appearance beneath the tree but otherwise it is a very low-maintenance tree. Plants can be watered until established and then forgotten except in the driest locations.

There are several hybrids available.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings which root quickly and easily.

Pests

Aphids, soft scale, nematodes, and sooty mold are minor problems for pinkball.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.