

# Jatropha integerrima: Peregrina<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This slender-stemmed, multi-trunked tropical evergreen tree or large shrub, a native of Cuba, reaches 15 feet in height with an equal spread, and has unusual 3 to 6-inchlong leaves varying in shape from oblong, fiddle-shaped, or even-lobed. The 1-inch-widebright red or pink flowers are produced year-round in beautiful clusters held upright above the foliage and helps make fire-cracker an interesting specimen plant. The seed capsules which follow hold several smooth, speckled, and toxic seeds, a fact which must be considered when placing this plant in the landscape; it should be kept out of the reach of children.

### **General Information**

Scientific name: Jatropha integerrima

**Pronunciation:** jat-ROE-fuh in-teh-GAIR-rih-muh **Common name(s):** peregrina, jatropha, fire-cracker

**Family:** *Euphorbiaceae* 

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 6)

**Origin:** native to Cuba

**UF/IFAS Invasive Assessment Status:** not considered a problem species at this time, may be recommended (North, Central, South)

**Uses:** specimen; deck or patio; container or planter; trained as a standard; highway median



Figure 1. Full Form - *Jatropha integerrima*: peregrina Credits: UF/IFAS

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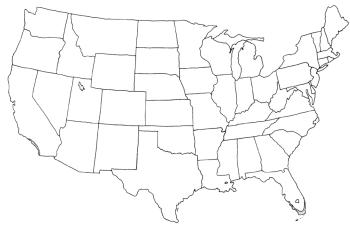


Figure 2. Range

# **Description**

**Height:** 10 to 15 feet **Spread:** 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical Crown shape: vase, round Crown density: open Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

# **Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple Leaf margin: lobed



Figure 3. Leaf - *Jatropha integerrima*: peregrina Credits: UF/IFAS

**Leaf shape:** oblong to obovate; 0-3-lobed with acuminate

tips

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen, evergreen

Leaf blade length: 3 to 6 inches

Leaf color: dark green and shiny of top, paler green

underneath

Fall color: no color change Fall characteristic: not showy

#### **Flower**

Flower color: bright red or pink

Flower characteristics: showy; emerges in clusters on

terminal cymes

Flowering: year-round



Figure 4. Flower - *Jatropha integerrima*: peregrina Credits: UF/IFAS

#### **Fruit**

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: ½ to 1 inch

Fruit covering: 6-lobed capsule that contains 3 smooth and

spotted seeds

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy;

fruit/leaves not a litter problem



Figure 5. Fruit - *Jatropha integerrima*: peregrina Credits: UF/IFAS

#### **Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; no thorns

**Bark:** gray brown and smooth, becoming textured with age **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure



Figure 6. Bark - *Jatropha integerrima*: peregrina Credits: Gitta Hasing, UF/IFAS

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown Current year twig thickness: medium Wood specific gravity: unknown

#### **Culture**

**Light requirement:** full sun to partial shade **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline;

well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate **Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

Soil salt tolerance: none

#### **Other**

Roots: not a problem Winter interest: yes Outstanding tree: yes

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown **Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

# **Use and Management**

Jatropha makes a delightful red-flowered accent in a shrub border planted to attract attention to an area. It flowers nearly year-round and so is quite popular as a patio tree or garden accent. Multiple trunks and stems originate near the ground forming a symmetrical, weeping clump of thinly-clothed branches. The tree can be staked and trained to grow with one trunk for two or three feet. This is a nice way to display the plant as an accent or specimen. Do not expect this small tree to provide shade, but it will attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

Peregrina should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soil. Full sun plants flower best. It is not salt-tolerant.

There is a pink-flowered form available at some nurseries.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

#### **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern but occasionally bothered by mites, scales, and superficial leaf miner.

## Reference

Koeser, A.K., Friedman, M.H., Hasing, G., Finley, H., Schelb, J. 2017. Trees: South Florida and the Keys. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.