



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Buddleia* spp.<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

A dense canopy of foliage and a generous flower display combine to make Butterflybush a popular item in many southern landscapes (Fig. 1). The plant is probably most popular because flowers attract many different butterflies and bees. It is one of the best plants for this purpose. Flowers clusters range from 6-to 24-inches long. The olive-green, simple, hairy leaves have serrated margins and a lanceolate shape that flutter in the slightest breeze lending a fine texture to the landscape. Plants become a tangled, woody mess after a couple of years and will need to be cut back every now and then. *Buddleia* is grown as a herbaceous perennial as far north as hardiness zone 5. Many last all year long in hardiness zones 9 through 11, but they to respond well to yearly cutting to the ground to stimulate fresh growth.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Buddleia* spp.

**Pronunciation:** bud-LEE-uh species

**Common name(s):** Butterfly-Bush

**Family:** *Loganiaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 10 (Fig. 2)

**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:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; trained as a standard; near a deck or patio; accent; border; attracts butterflies; attracts



**Figure 1.** Butterfly-Bush.

hummingbirds

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### **Description**

**Height:** 6 to 12 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 12 feet

**Plant habit:** round

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Plant density:** open  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** serrate  
**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** brachidodrome; pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** semi-evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white; purple; pink  
**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:**  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; not particularly showy  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** occasionally wet; acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay;  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

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

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

Butterflybush performs nicely in a container provided it is placed in a full sun location. In a container, it can be trained into a multi-trunked shrub resembling a small tree, but requires daily irrigation to maintain flowering and a good appearance. Planted in a landscape, Butterflybush does well in the middle or front of the shrub border so it receives full sun. This also allows its flowers to be displayed in front of the taller plants in the border. Surrounding plants will help keep the plant from falling over. Planted as a specimen by itself, Butterflybush may be disappointing since it usually falls over. For the most dramatic effect, plant it in mass in a large-scale landscape.

Plants should be located in the full sun for best flowering. They grow in partial shade but flower production is reduced. Alkaline soil appears to support adequate growth in many instances.

*Buddleia asiatica* is poisonous. At least 25 cultivars are listed for *Buddleia davidii*, each with a slightly different flower coloration. *Buddleia officinalis* is well suited for south Florida.

### Pests and Diseases

A caterpillar occasionally eats foliage but is usually of little consequence.