**Aesculus x carnea ‘Briotii’**
Ruby Red Horsechestnut

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**INTRODUCTION**

This hybrid of *Aesculus hippocastanum* and *Aesculus pavia* has very large, dark green leaves composed of five to seven leaflets, and will ultimately reach a height and spread of 35 to 50 feet but grows slowly (Fig. 1). Although deciduous, Ruby Red Horsechestnut does not produce any appreciable fall color and is well-suited for use as a specimen. The tree is quite striking with dark green, coarse-textured foliage. Pyramidal in shape when very young, Red Horsechestnut develops slowly into a round, very dense shade tree by five to seven years of age, and is outstanding in the landscape for its beautiful springtime display of blossoms. The multitude of deep scarlet flowers in erect, 10-inch-long panicles at each branch tip are quite attractive to bees and hummingbirds. The prickly seedpods which can be messy on the original hybrid are nearly absent on this cultivar making it better suited than the species for urban street tree planting.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Aesculus x carnea* ‘Briotii’

**Pronunciation:** ESS-kew-lus x KAR-nee-uh

**Common name(s):** Ruby Red Horsechestnut

**Family:** Hippocastanaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 7 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; shade tree; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree

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

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 35 to 45 feet

**Spread:** 35 to 45 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Aesculus x carnea 'Briotii' -- Ruby Red Horsechestnut

Crown shape: round; pyramidal
Crown density: dense
Growth rate: slow
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: palmately compound
Leaflet margin: serrate
Leaflet shape: oblanceolate
Leaflet venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaflet blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: pink; red
Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit
There is no fruit on this tree.

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Soil salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Leaf and flower litter in the summer and fall may be objectionable to some people since the leaves are large and decompose slowly. Makes a great median street tree when provided with some irrigation during drought.

Ruby Red Horsechestnut will grow in full sun or light shade and prefers moist, well-drained, acid soils but grows in slightly alkaline soil. Plants are moderately tolerant to drought, wind, and salt and resist the heat of the south very well. It holds up well in urban areas, even in restricted and compacted soil spaces. Red Horsechestnut appears to be less susceptible to disease than either of the parents. Trunk bark may crack when exposed to the direct sun so keep it shaded as much as possible by leaving lower branches on the tree and don’t over-prune the tree, exposing the trunk suddenly to direct sun. The tree usually requires little pruning to develop a good form.

The cultivar ‘Rosea’ has pink flowers. ‘O’Neil’s Red’ has double red flowers.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern, although this plant has not been thoroughly tested in the United States. Probably scorches less than Aesculus hippocastanum, and should be planted in its place.