



# *Aesculus indica* Indian Horsechestnut<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Indian Horsechestnut is a large, rounded tree, reaching up to 100 feet in height, with nine-inch-long leaves and smooth, grayish-red bark (Fig. 1). Trees grown in an open landscape setting probably reach about 40 to 60 feet tall. In June and July, the tree is decorated with upright panicles of white blooms, the flowers stalks most often seen four to six inches high but they may be much larger. These blooms are followed by the production of a spiny, green fruit which holds several brown seeds.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Aesculus indica*

**Pronunciation:** ESS-kew-lus IN-dih-kuh

**Common name(s):** Indian Horsechestnut

**Family:** *Hippocastanaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 40 to 60 feet

**Spread:** 35 to 50 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** oval; round

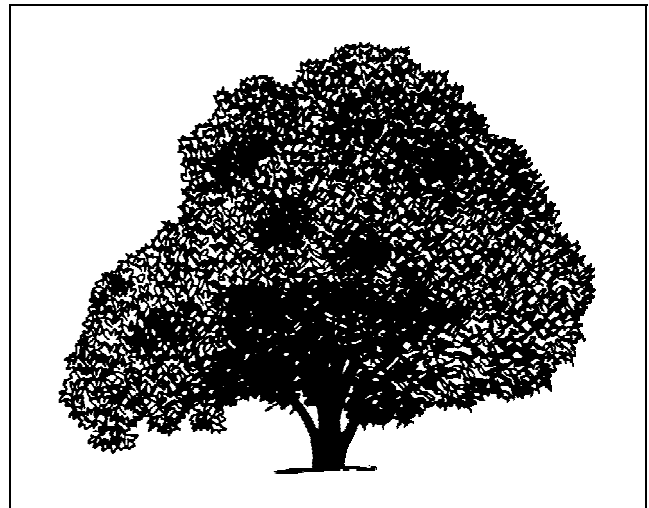


Figure 1. Mature Indian Horsechestnut.

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** medium

**Texture:** coarse

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** palmately compound

**Leaflet margin:** serrate; undulate

**Leaflet shape:** obovate

**Leaflet venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaflet blade length:** 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** orange

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristics:** summer flowering; very showy

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** green

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown; gray

**Current year twig thickness:** thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** none

**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

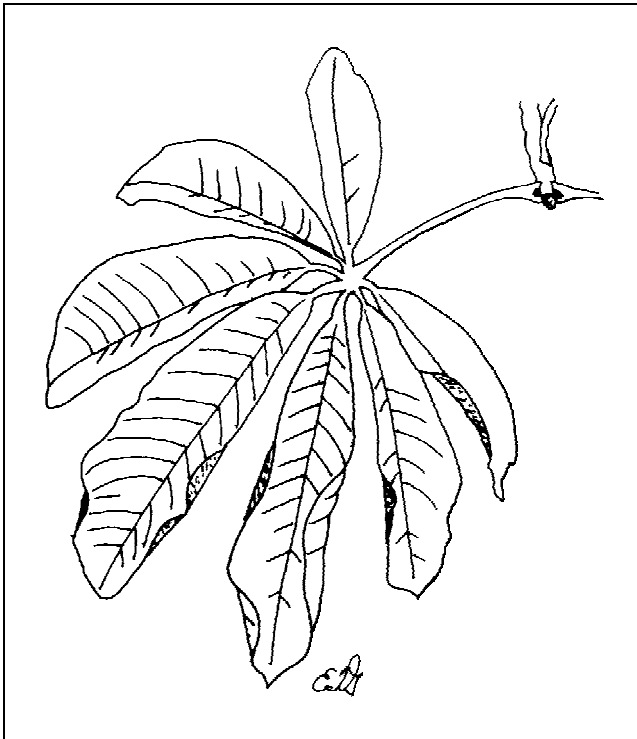
**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**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



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Indian Horsechestnut.

### **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

The tree has not been extensively available, but could make a nice park or landscape tree for a large commercial landscape or an estate. It has been successfully grown in California and in the northwest part of the United States, and could be tried in the east. The cold hardiness of the plant is uncertain. The coarse texture, low branching habit and uniformly round canopy make it stand out among other trees. Children would enjoy climbing this well-branched tree. The beauty of this tree calls for some trials in the eastern part of the country.

The cultivar 'Sydney Pearce' has richer green leaves and flower-spikes 12 inches high.

### **Pests and Diseases**

The pests and diseases affecting this tree are not well understood due to the limited experience with this tree.