



Callistemon viminalis Weeping Bottlebrush¹

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INTRODUCTION

This popular evergreen tree has a dense, multitrunked, low-branching, pendulous growth habit and a moderate growth rate (Fig. 1). Mature specimens can reach 25 to 30 feet tall in 30-years but most trees are seen 15 to 20 feet high and wide. The narrow, light green, three to four-inch-long leaves tend to grow only at the ends of the long, hanging branches, creating a weeping effect. The cylindrical, bright scarlet blooms, three to five inches long and one-inch wide, are composed of multiple, long, bristlelike stamens. These blooms appear in great abundance March through July, less so throughout the year. The flowers are followed by persistent woody capsules which are not noticed unless you are close to the tree.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Callistemon viminalis*

Pronunciation: kal-liss-STEE-mawn
vim-min-NAY-liss

Common name(s): Weeping Bottlebrush

Family: *Myrtaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; 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; near a deck or patio; screen; specimen; residential street tree

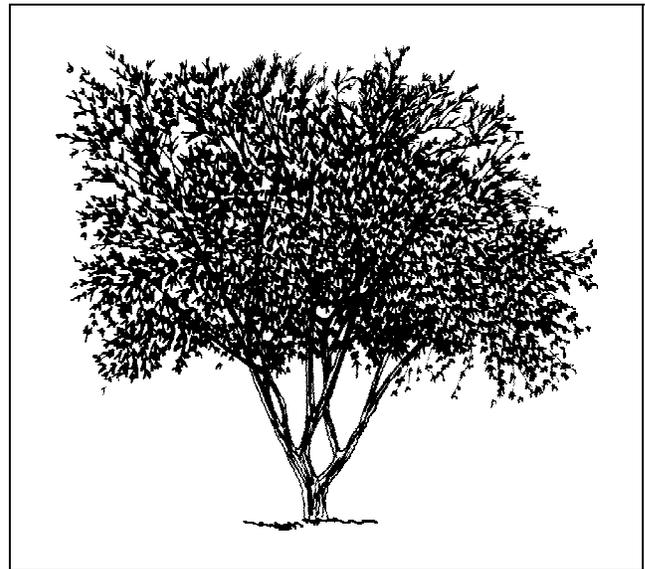


Figure 1. Mature Weeping Bottlebrush.

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; weeping

Crown density: open

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** entire
- Leaf shape:** lanceolate; linear
- Leaf venation:** parallel
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** red
- Flower characteristics:** spring flowering; summer flowering; very showy (Fig. 3)

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** < .5 inch
- Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the 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: gray

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

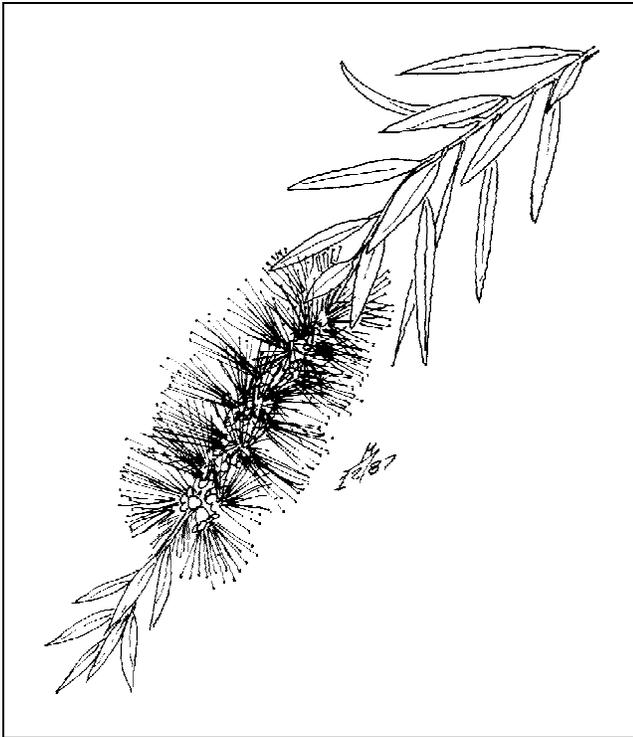


Figure 3. Flower of Weeping Bottlebrush.

The cultivar 'Red Cascade' has large red flowers in spring and fall. *Callistemon citrinis* and *Callistemon rigidus* are hardy in the southern part of USDA hardiness zone 8b.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests

Mites and witches broom can be troublesome.

Diseases

Root rot in wet soil, and canker. A twig gall, formed in response to a fungus (*Sphaeropsis tumefacens*), can disfigure the tree. The tree is often short-lived due to disease.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

Weeping Bottlebrushes should be grown in full sun, preferably on moist, well-drained soil. Although they can tolerate some drought, best flowering and growth is obtained with ample moisture and regular fertilization. Be sure the soil drains well as roots often rot in wet soil. The brittle wood of Weeping Bottlebrush may make it unsuitable for windy areas but this is usually not a problem in most locations. They are not suitable for street tree planting due to the weeping growth habit, but will make nice plantings along streets in wide medians. Lower branches can be removed so cars can fit beneath in parking lots where they grow well in the restricted soil space. Occasional pruning of pendulous branches will be required for vehicle clearance. One of the best uses is for lawn specimens, or screens on large properties, with a regular maintenance program.