**Dombeya wallichii**  
Pinkball¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

**INTRODUCTION**

Nothing could be more attention-getting than Pinkball when in full bloom (Fig. 1). Huge, pendent clusters of tightly-packed, five to six-inch-diameter, pink flowers give much the impression of upsidedown corsages intermixed with large, coarsely-textured, light green leaves. Pinkball maintains a rounded form and can grow to 20 feet in height with an equal spread and makes a spectacular specimen planting or patio tree. It is usually grown as a shrub.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Dombeya wallichii  
**Pronunciation:** dom-BEE-yuh wall-ICK-ee-eye  
**Common name(s):** Pinkball  
**Family:** Sterculiaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** near a deck or patio; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 20 to 30 feet  
**Spread:** 20 to 25 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms  
**Crown shape:** round  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** medium

**TEXTURE:** coarse

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** crenate; serrate  
**Leaf shape:** cordate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate; palmate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change

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Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: pink
Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; winter flowering

Fruit
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break
Current year twig color: green
Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture
Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

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
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT
Growing rapidly in full sun to partial shade on a wide variety of soils, Pinkball needs protection from frost and is not salt-tolerant. Flower heads fall from the tree, remaining pink for a number of days. The dried flower heads will need to be cleaned up for a neat appearance beneath the tree but otherwise it is a
very low-maintenance tree. Plants can be watered until established and then forgotten except in the driest locations.

There are several hybrids available.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings which root quickly and easily.

**Pests**

Aphids, soft scale, nematodes, and sooty mold are minor problems for Pinkball.

**Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.