



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Acalypha hispida¹

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Introduction

Chenille Plant is a vigorous, upright, coarse-textured shrub that usually attains a height of 5 to 6 feet (Fig. 1). Older specimens can grow taller with some support. The stems are heavily foliated with 6 to 8 inch long, ovate, medium-green leaves. The flowers of Chenille Plant are attractive and droop in cattail-like, pendent clusters up to 18 inches in length. Flowers are showy, red, and borne by female plants during warm months of the year.

General Information

Scientific name: *Acalypha hispida*

Pronunciation: ack-uh-LIFE-uh HISS-pid-uh

Common name(s): Chenille Plant

Family: *Euphorbiaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: hedge; specimen; foundation; border; mass planting; accent

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

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Spread: 6 to 8 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

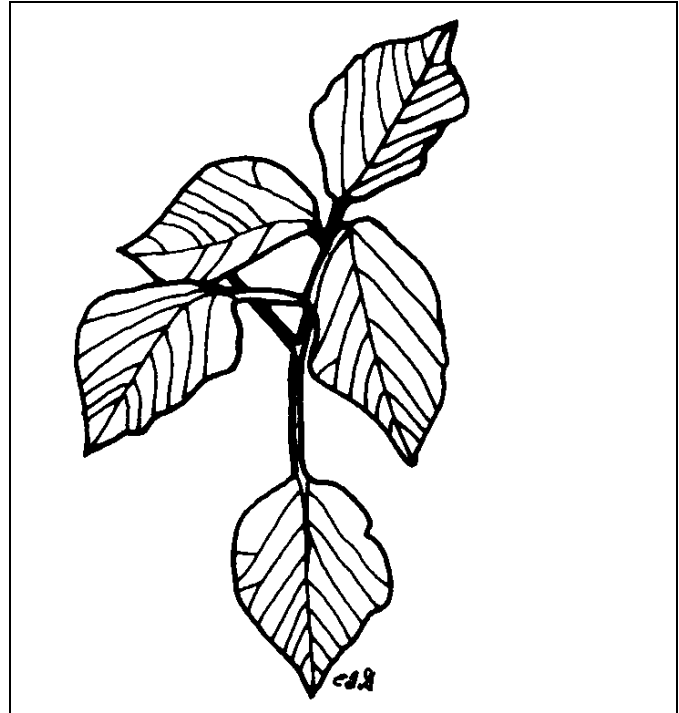


Figure 1. Chenille Plant.

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-4, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate; arcuate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit
Fruit length: no fruit
Fruit cover: no fruit
Fruit color: no fruit
Fruit characteristic: no fruit

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: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly 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: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Chenille Plant is a beautiful flowering shrub that is commonly used as an accent, hedge, specimen, or container plant. Its long period of bloom makes it a showy centerpiece for any tropical or subtropical garden. It is well suited for planting in a container to be set on a deck or patio.

Chenille Plant performs well in many types of well-drained landscape soils. It grows and flowers best in full sun, with little care other than irrigation needed to maintain the plant once it is established. After the plant finishes flowering, pruning may be needed to keep it a desired size.

Propagation is by cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

There are no diseases of major concern associated with Chenille Plant. Scales, mites and aphids may be troublesome pests in some landscapes, especially when grown in partial shade.

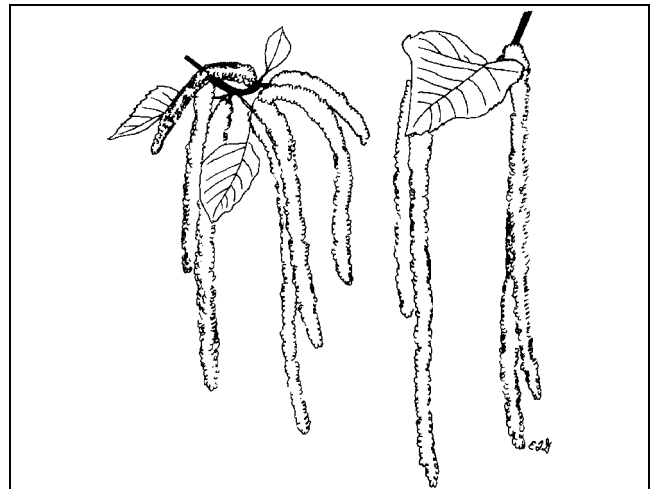


Figure 3. Flower of Chenille Plant