



Bauhinia variegata 'Candida' 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree¹

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INTRODUCTION

The fast-growing White Orchid-Tree grows 20 to 40 feet in height with a 20 to 30-foot-spread, the slender trunks topped with arching branches clothed in large, two-lobed, deciduous leaves (Fig. 1). In fall, before the leaves drop, white orchid-tree is festooned with many showy and delightfully fragrant, five-inch-wide, pure white, orchid-shaped blossoms. These flowers appear on the trees from January to April and are a beautiful sight to see. The flowers are followed by 12-inch-long, slender, brown, flat seedpods which usually persist on the tree throughout the winter. This spectacular display makes orchid-tree a favorite for specimen and street-tree plantings.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Bauhinia variegata* 'Candida'
Pronunciation: bah-HIN-ee-uh vair-ee-eh-GAY-tuh
Common name(s): 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree
Family: *Leguminosae*
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (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; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

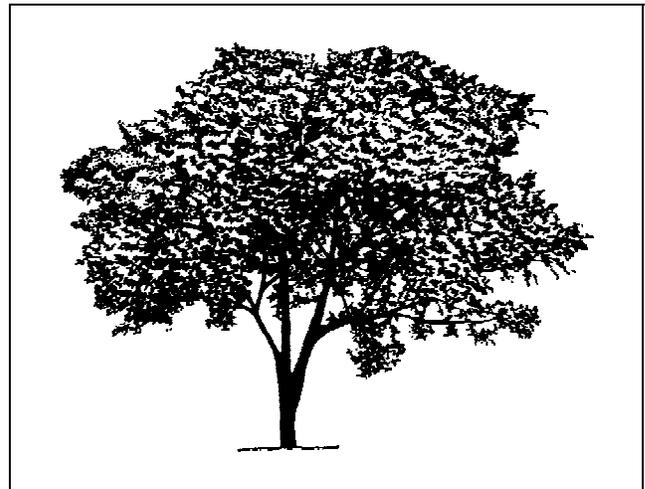


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Candida' Variegated Orchid-Tree.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 20 to 35 feet
Spread: 20 to 30 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: vase shape
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed; cleft
Leaf shape: orbiculate
Leaf venation: palmate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous;
semievergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 12 inches or more

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

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: 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: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

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: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: No entries found.

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

White Orchid-Tree should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. Trees are very drought-tolerant and actually flower best on dry soils. Problems include a tendency to show nutritional deficiencies, especially potassium; the weak wood which is susceptible to breakage in storms; the abundant seedlings which may germinate in the landscape; and the litter problem created by the falling leaves, flowers, and seedpods. Orchid-tree may need occasional pruning to develop a uniform shape when it is young. Branches tend to develop low on the trunk and droop toward the ground forming a large bush if left unpruned. Occasional pruning during the life of the tree will help maintain a nice, neat appearance.

Pests

Caterpillars, mites, borers.

Diseases

Leaf spot, leaf scorch, mushroom root rot diseases.