



# *Calliandra surinamensis* Pink Powderpuff<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

This large, multiple trunked, low-branching, evergreen shrub has silky leaflets which are glossy copper when new, turning to a dark metallic green (Fig. 1). The profuse, fragrant bloom is the main reason for its popularity, with big puffs, two to three inches across, of watermelon pink and white silky stamens, produced during warm months.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Calliandra surinamensis*

**Pronunciation:** kal-ee-AN-druh ser-ih-nuh-MEN-sis

**Common name(s):** Pink Powderpuff

**Family:** *Leguminosae*

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; espalier; hedge; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; trainable as a standard; specimen

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

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 12 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 10 to 15 feet

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

**Crown shape:** round; vase shape

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** fast

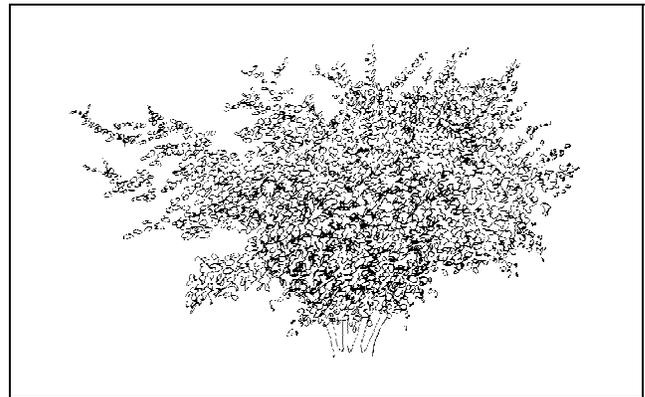


Figure 1. Middle-aged Pink Powderpuff.

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** bipinnately compound; even pinnately compound

**Leaflet margin:** entire

**Leaflet shape:** oblong

**Leaflet venation:** bowed; parallel; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaflet blade length:** 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Flower

**Flower color:** pink

**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; showy; year round flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** pod

**Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

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

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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; no thorns

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

**Breakage:** resistant

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

**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

### 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:** long-term health usually not affected by pests



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Pink Powderpuff.

### **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

With rapid growth in sandy soils and full sun, Powderpuff bush will respond favorably to regular watering while young but should require no special care once established except an occasional pruning to keep it within bounds. Pinching new growth increases the number of branches and enhances flower display. Powderpuff bush may be used as a tall (five to six-foot) flowering hedge and is often seen as a small, flowering specimen tree with the lower branches pruned off. Powderpuff can grow to about 15 feet tall when pruned into a small tree. The long, arching branches form an attractive canopy suitable for patio or container plantings.

Although plants are damaged by freezing temperatures, they grow back from the base in the spring in USDA hardiness zone 9.

Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

### **Pests**

While usually pest-free, Powderpuff bush can be occasionally infested by mites, caterpillars, or other chewing insects.

### **Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.