

South Carolina Urban and Community Forestry Council

Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place

Fringetree

Latin name: <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	Texture: Medium
Common name: Fringetree	Growth rate: Slow, moderate life span
Zones: 4-9	Light: Full sun to part shade
Height & Width: 12-15'h x 10-15'w	Moisture: Medium
Type: Deciduous	Soil: Acid
Habit: Spreading, open, multiple or single trunk	Origin: Southern New Jersey to Florida and Texas

Features: Showy white fragrant blooms hang in panicles, like fringe, for approximately two weeks in spring. Male plants have showier, slightly larger flowers. Leaves emerge during bloom time and add dark green interest in summer. Autumn foliage color ranges from gold to yellow to green-brown. Showy purplish-blue fruit appear on female trees and attract birds in late summer. Gray, smooth thin bark forms light ridges with age. Plants naturally produce multi-stemmed trunks but may be trained early to have single trunk.



Photo by Robert H. Mohlenbrock. USDA NRCS. 1995.

Siting: Fringetree is an ideal plant for urban environments due to its small size, air pollution tolerance, adaptability to soil textures and moisture levels, and its high pest resistance. Its natural setting is along stream banks and swamp edges. Plants are often used in the shrub border, buffer strip, or sidewalk cutout. It stays small enough to plant under utility lines. Place in an area with 100 square feet of total planting area; in a planting strip at least 4' wide; or place at least 2' from pavement or wall. Sun enhances flowering, yet afternoon shade suits the foliage. Roots prefer deep, moist, acid soils. Plants tolerate a variety of soil textures; exhibit moderate drought tolerance once established; and tolerate occasional wet soil. Thin bark is susceptible to mechanical injury.

Care: Little or no pruning is required to develop strong structure and limbs are strong. Decide while plant is young whether multiple or a single trunk is desired and prune accordingly. Plant so root flare is visible in loose soil. Well-drained soil, full or partial sun, and ample water during establishment are ideal. At planting, water the root ball daily with two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for two weeks, every other day for two months and then weekly until established. Modify water recommendations to reflect site drainage and rainfall. Apply 3" of mulch over the planted area. Do not allow mulch to touch the trunk.

Pests: Plants are relatively pest resistant if cultural preferences are met. Scales and mites may cause problems if plants are in full sun.



Contact the SC Urban and Community Forestry Council at www.scurbanforestry.org for membership and additional information.

*Soil pH is determined using a professional soil test. Contact your Clemson University County Extension service for assistance www.clemson.edu/extension/. Click on "local offices".

Tree selected from the *Urban Tree Species Guide: Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place*.

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