

Aesculus pavia

Red Buckeye

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic



Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
Arlington • Alexandria • mgnv.org

Native mostly to the southeastern United States,* this understory tree is found in woods and along streams. Its common name refers to shiny seeds called buckeyes, which are encased in husked seed capsules. Its showy flowers, suggestive of firecrackers, have led to its alternative name, Firecracker Plant.

Tree	Shrub, Tree, Flowers, Seed Capsules, Fruit	
Height: 12–15 feet		
Spread: 12–15 feet		
Bloom color: Bright red		
Characteristics		
Clump-forming, deciduous large shrub/small tree with irregular rounded crown		
Glossy, dark green leaves are palmate with five coarsely-toothed leaflets up to 6 inches long		
Showy 4- to 10-inch upright clusters of deep red, tubular flowers bloom for 2 weeks in mid-spring		
Smooth, tan-brown, husked seed capsule encloses 1–3 shiny brown fruits that mature in fall		
Leaves yellow by summer's end and drop early		
Attributes		
Tolerates clay soil; intolerant of drought; no serious pests but leaf blotch can be a major problem (remove fallen leaves promptly and place in the trash); deer rarely damage		
Ethnobotanic uses; plant may be harmful if eaten		
Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies; bark, foliage, and seeds are toxic to mammalian herbivore		
Growing and Maintenance Tips		
Soil requirements: Acidic, well-drained soil		Excellent Replacement for
Light requirements: Sun, Partial Shade		<i>Albizia julibrissin</i> - Mimosa
Water requirements: Moist	<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i> - Princess Tree	
Overwatering can lead to leaf-spot diseases	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> - Chaste Tree	
Place for spring visibility, but less noticeable location after leaf drop; protect from afternoon sun		
Use as a specimen or hedge, or in a rain garden		
Hardiness: USDA Zones 4–8	*It is not native to the Mid-Atlantic Region.	

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Alyssa Ford Morel (shrub), Mary Free (flowers, seed capsule), and Elaine Mills (mature fruit), Glencarlyn Library and by Elaine Mills (April and September trees), Walter Reed Drive, Arlington, VA