

Spring and Summer Bloomer: Tree Bougainvillea



Buckingham, Lee County, 22 April

Tree Bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* species)

Origin: Unknown
Zone: 9B—12 (Minimum 26°F)
Growth Rate: Fast
Typical Dimension: 24' x 28'
Light Requirements: High
Drought Tolerance: High
Salt Tolerance: High
Soil Requirements: Wide
Nutritional Requirements: Low
Plant Type: Evergreen tree; briefly deciduous in marginally cold areas
Flower Color: Urn-shaped, green and white
Bracts: Always lavender-violet
Flowering Season: Spring and Summer
Propagation: Cuttings
Common Uses: Flowering tree
Human Hazards: Sometimes spiny
Major Problems: None



Flowers and bract, 22 April



Orlando, Florida, 15 June



Buckingham, Lee County, 16 May

Tree bougainvillea is a rare find in Florida and elsewhere where bougainvilleas are grown. There is mass confusion as to its appropriate botanical name. *B. arborea*, *B. glabra* 'Arborea,' and *B. glabra* var. *sanderiana* are commonly found names. *B.* species is used here to denote it as an unidentified or unnamed bougainvillea plant.

Most tree bougainvilleas are spineless. It thrives in dry, sunny, hot areas. The soil must be well drained and nutrient poor soils presents no problems. Tree bougainvillea has a short trunk and a dense crown. Color comes from its bracts not its flowers. It is essential that the plant is pruned after flowering to keep it in check and to encourage new flowers. This can be a messy tree with dried fallen bracts during summer. Unlike many other bougainvilleas, tree bougainvillea is not normally bothered by caterpillars.

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