Old Fashioned Weigela
(Weigela florida)

Alex X. Niemiera, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture

Summary:

Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf   Height: 9 feet
Spread: 12 feet   Shape: upright, spreading
Old fashioned weigela is a large shrub with a coarse texture and showy spring flowers. This plant is best suited for a shrub border. There are several new cultivars which are improved versions (dwarf, foliage and flower characteristics) compared to the species.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 5 to 8   Light: Partial shade to full sun
Moisture: Moist to dry   Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay
pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include border, screen, and massing.

Planting Notes:

Tolerates wide range of soil and light conditions.
Pollution tolerant.
Prefers well-drained soil and full sun.

Care:

Easy to grow.
Prune one-third of the oldest wood each spring after flowering to maintain plant shape and control dieback.

Problems:

No serious pest or disease problems.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta, regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.
Cultivars of *Weigela florida*:
`Bristol Ruby' has ruby red flowers.
`Variegata' grows up to 4 feet tall. Foliage color is variegated with yellow. Flowers are pink.
Wine and Roses® has pink flowers and dark burgundy leaves on a compact plant that matures at 5 feet tall.

Comments:

Most of the weigelas in the nursery trade are hybrids developed to produce superior flowers.
The stems are usually covered with flowers for a short period of time in the spring.
Best used in a shrub border or in large groups. Also serves as good background for smaller plants. Unless one buys a variegated cultivar (non-green or multi-colored foliage), this species is in the same limited showiness category as forsythia, i.e., showy in flower for a few weeks and then non-descript for the rest of the year.