

Glossy Abelia

Abelia ×grandiflora

Alex X. Niemiera, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture

Summary:

Foliage: Lustrous 1-inch leaves; evergreen to semi-deciduous depending on hardiness zone

Height: About 8 feet tall

Spread: About 6 feet wide

Shape: Round to oval

Main features: Glossy abelia is a medium to large evergreen shrub with lustrous foliage and relatively showy flowers from late spring till the first autumn frost (attracts butterflies and bees). In hardiness zone 6a, this species will be semi-evergreen to deciduous depending on minimum winter temperatures and duration of low temperatures. Glossy abelia is quite heat and drought tolerant. This species is very useful as a hedge, in mass, foundation plant, and barrier plant. Recently, there have been several new cultivars introduced into the nursery/landscape trade; many of these introductions have variegated foliage (see Additional Information section).

Plant Needs:

Zone: 6 to 9

Light: Full sun to part shade (shade will reduce density and flowering)

Moisture: Average to dry

Soil type: Most types

pH range: Acid

Functions:

Glossy abelia is very useful as a hedge, in mass, foundation plant, and barrier plant.

Care:

No special care is needed for this plant. Some of the cultivars, and even the species, benefit from a hard pruning to rejuvenate the plant; a more compact form with more flowers is the result. Due to its prolonged flowering season, the plant is continually visited by bees and butterflies throughout the late spring/summer. Persons allergic to bee stings may not want to place this plant close to an entryway, play area, or walkway.

Additional Information:

There are numerous cultivars of glossy abelia in the trade. Many of these cultivars are variegated; on some of these cultivars, the variegation trait fades during the growing season, and plants occasionally produce vigorous shoots that are typical of the species and not the cultivar (genetic reversion to the parental characteristic). Vigorous shoots should be removed; these and other cultivars are helped by a hard pruning. Some of the cultivars include:

Bronze Anniversary™ compact form with bronze-orange new foliage in spring that matures to gold; similar to 'Canyon Creek'

'Canyon Creek' bronze new growth that matures to gold and yellow; stressed plants will lose variegation in summer; large pink fragrant flowers; semi-evergreen to deciduous in zone 7

'Edward Goucher' medium shrub with pink flowers; related to, but not a true, glossy abelia (*Abelia × grandiflora*); less hardy than glossy abelia and best used in zones 6b and higher

Golden Anniversary™ compact form with gold margins on green leaves

'Kaleidoscope' compact form with golden yellow foliage with irregular green center; foliage red-rose in cold weather

'Lavendar Mist' fragrant lavender flowers; zone 7; needs yearly rejuvenation pruning (hard pruning) to encourage compact growth and heavy flower production

'Little Richard' dwarf form with abundant flowers; new growth is bright red

'Raspberry Profusion' profuse show of large pink flowers; essentially deciduous in winter

'Rose Creek' compact form with white pink flowers;

Silver Anniversary™ similar to Golden Anniversary™ but with gray-silver margin on green leaves.