



Vitex agnus-castrus (Chaste Tree)

Height 10' to 15'

Spread 10' to 15'

Growth rate Fast

Bloom Color Blue, Lavender and White

Bloom Time Spring and Summer

Environment

This tree tolerates drought and some salt. Suitable soil is fertile and well drained. The pH preference is an acidic to alkaline (less than 6.8 to more than 7.7) soil.

Description and Origin

The Chaste tree is fragrant and attracts pollinating bees, and hummingbirds make hungry visits. Flowers are followed by a fleshy fruit that contains four seeds that are sometimes used as seasoning. The tree is native to woodlands and dry areas of southern Europe and western Asia. Because of its many admirable attributes, the chaste tree is a garden favorite wherever in the world it can be grown.

Culture Notes

They prefer a loose, well-drained soil that is moist or on the dry side, not wet, but will tolerate drained clay or sandy soils. The tree often suffers from dieback in organic, mucky, or other soil which is kept too moist. They should be planted in full sun or light shade, and will tolerate hot weather extremely well, moderate salt air exposure and alkaline soil. Large, old trees can be 40 years old, or more. The flowers produced in the summer last for several weeks and attract butterflies. A regular fertilization program and locating the plant in full sun keeps plants vigorous and flowering. Micronutrient applications may help keep chlorosis to a minimum in alkaline soil. This plant is considered mostly allergy free and causes little or no allergy problems in most people. Plants serve as butterfly nectar sources.

Pests and Diseases

Pests: None of major concern. Diseases: Leaf spot is not very common but root rot can cause decline in soils which are kept too moist.

Maintain adequate mulch area

Clear all turf away from beneath the branches and mulch to the drip line, especially on young trees, to reduce competition with turf and weeds. This will allow roots to become well established and keep plants healthier. Apply a thinner layer of mulch directly over the root ball but keep it away from the trunk. This allows rainwater, irrigation and air to easily enter the root ball and keeps the trunk dry. Placing mulch against the trunk and applying too thick a layer above the root ball can kill the plant.

Tree establishment specifications

Choose good quality trees for planting and locate the tree properly, taking into account the ultimate size, since the tree looks best if it is not pruned to control size. It can be the centerpiece of your landscape if properly located.

The most common cause of young tree failure is planting too deep. In most instances, the point where the top-most root in the root ball originates from the trunk should be located just above the soil surface.

Trees with good, strong structure need no pruning at planting, except to remove broken twigs. Do not remove branches to compensate for root loss, research has shown that this can be detrimental to establishment.