Spring and Summer Bloomer:  
Tree Bougainvillea

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

Buckingham, Lee County, 22 April

Flowers and bract, 22 April
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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