

# Abelia x grandiflora

**Common Name(s):** Glossy Abelia

**Cultivar(s):** Edward Goucher (more compact), Canyon Creek, Kaleidoscope, Little Richard, Mardis Gras, Rose Creek, Silver Anniversary

**Category:** Shrubs

**Comment:** Drought tolerant; hardy; flowers on new growth; easy to grow; can be severely pruned; 'Edward Goucher' is slightly more compact, 3-5' with lavender-pink flowers. This shrub is resistant to damage by deer.

**Height:** 3-6 ft.

**Foliage:** 0.7 to 1.5 in. glossy dark green leaves; opposite, simple; turns bronze-green to bronze-red in winter

**Flower:** White, funnel-shaped 0.75 to 1 in. flowers from early summer to frost; develops a light purple-pink tinge; free flowering; slightly fragrant

**Zones:** 6 to 9

**Habit:** Semi-evergreen

**Site:** Sun to partial shade; prefers moist, well-drained site but tolerates clay, damp, or dry soil

**Texture:** Medium to fine

**Form:** Spreading, dense, rounded, multi-stemmed shrub; arching branches; can become leggy

**Width:** 3-6 ft.



Abelia x grandiflora blooms

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Abelia x grandiflora 'Kaleidoscope' foliage

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## **Currituck Master Gardeners Plant of the Month – May 2017**

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Abelia is the perfect shrub you can add to your garden for year-round, ever changing colors. In the spring, the foliage emerges a cheerful green and yellow, turns to a rich gold in summer and has an incredible show of fiery reds and crimsons in the fall and winter.

Glossy Abelia grows in an upright-spreading vase shape if left unpruned with numerous thin stems arising from the ground. Glossy Abelia makes it ideal for use as a specimen, foundation plant, shrub border, planted along a steep bank for erosion control, or it can be clipped into a hedge. If using as a hedge, be sure that the top of the hedge is clipped narrower than the bottom to allow adequate light to reach the bottom foliage. This will help keep the plant full all the way to the ground. Foliage arises maroon fading to dark green, lending a reddish cast to the plant during active growth. The small powderpuff-pink flowers add color continuously during the warm months.

Blooming on new growth in the summer, Glossy Abelia benefits from springtime pruning and will require occasional thinning to keep it in bounds as a hedge. Thinning will help light reach the interior foliage stimulating branching and creating a fuller plant. Glossy Abelia enjoys fairly rich, moist but well-drained soil in full sun or lightly shaded location and has good drought-tolerance. Plants become thin and unattractive in the shade and do not flower.

Plant on 4 to 6 foot centers to form a screen or foundation planting, slightly closer for a hedge. The foliage darkens during the winter but plants generally remain full all during the cold months. Cultivars include: 'Confetti' - cream-variegated foliage, cream colored area turns reddish in cool weather, evergreen to about 10 degrees; 'Francis Mason'- new green foliage changes to glossy yellow as it matures, color more noticeable in full sun, light pink flowers, 3 to 4 feet high; 'Prostrata'- prostrate growth habit, white flowers, sometimes used as a ground cover; and 'Sherwoodii'- dwarf, to 3 feet, somewhat smaller leaves and flowers. Abelia 'Edward Goucher', a hybrid between *Abelia x grandiflora* and *Abelia schumannii*, has abundant lavender-pink flowers and showy red calyces, reaches 5 to 8 feet, and is best used in USDA hardiness zone 6 and south. It is superior to most other Abelia due to the highly fragrant pink flowers. Propagation is by cuttings of long, leafless, hardwood stems taken in November to January. **Source - University of Florida - Fact Sheet FPS-2 October, 1999**

**Pruning** - Remove dead wood and damaged stems from your Abelia whenever you notice them. Snip the stems at ground level if the entire stem is dead. If only part of a stem is affected, make the cut below the damage and just above a lateral branch or bud. For general maintenance, prune Abelia in late winter or early spring. Abelia blossoms on new wood, so avoid pruning after spring growth begins. Prune Abelia to maintain size and shape beginning in its third growing season. Select the three longest, thickest interior stems and snip them off near ground level then continue pruning stems in a random, natural-looking pattern until you have removed up to one-third of the plant. If you must rehabilitate a badly overgrown Abelia, you may choose to cut all stems to the ground in late winter before new spring growth begins. Abelia will generally accept severe pruning and regain its normal height within several years.