

***Clerodendrum trichotomum*** C.P. Thunberg  
(*Clerodendron trichotomum*)

**Harlequin Glorybower**

**Other Common Names:** Hardy Clerodendrum, Tree-of-Bad-Fortune, Tree-of-Good-Fortune.

**Family:** *Verbenaceae*.

**Cold Hardiness:** Useful as a woody shrub or small tree in USDA zones 8 and 9 (10), as a dieback shrub, subshrub, or herbaceous perennial in zone 7 or perhaps 6b.

**Foliage:** Deciduous to semi-evergreen; opposite; simple; ovate to ovate-elliptic; blade medium to dark green in color; (3½") 40 to 60 (90) long by 20 to 50 wide; tip acuminate; base broadly cuneate, broadly rounded, to nearly truncate; margins nearly entire or with sparse shallow toothing; leaves softly tomentose, particularly beneath; palmately veined; petioles green to red in color and covered with a tomentose; petioles long, (1½") 20 to 40 long; leaves emitting a strong scent when crushed ranging from malodorous to reminiscent of green peas (*Pisum sativum* L.); no fall color develops.

**Flower:** Long peduncled axillary cymes of white perfect flowers on new growth; corolla tubular with five flaring individual narrow lobes opening to a 10 to 1½" diameter; calyx subtending the flower and becoming persistent; stamens long exerted; fragrant; very showy *en masse*.

**Fruit:** Roundish drupe; ⅓" to ½" in diameter; blue at maturity subtended by a persistent fleshy red calyx; attractive in fruit.

**Stem / Bark:** Stems — new growth covered in a whitish tomentose; variably flattened at the nodes; medium thickness; green becoming brown; odiferous if scratched; Buds — small, 1/16" or less long; green to brownish covered in a white pubescence; Bark — brown.

**Habit:** Growth habit is highly dependent upon the cultural environment; plants in warmer regions will develop into irregular upright oval to upright rounded large shrubs or small trees, 10' to 15' (20') tall, while plants in colder environments will be irregular suckering herbaceous perennials; plants are medium coarse to coarse in texture.

**Cultural Requirements:** Full sun for best flowering, fruiting, and densest growth habit; tolerant of partial shade, but the canopy becomes even more irregular and open; adapted to a variety of soil pH and types; avoid permanently soggy soils; where freeze damage occurs, an annual spring clean-up pruning will be required; an easily grown species.

**Pathological Problems:** None particularly serious.

**Ornamental Assets:** Interesting summer flowers and early fall fruit; 'Variegata' varies in foliage color effectiveness with climate; most *Clerodendrum spp.* including *C. trichotomum* attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

**Limitations & Liabilities:** Poor form and a tendency to sucker freely from the roots are the worst problems; limited in cold tolerance.

**Landscape Utilization:** Probably at its best in a mixed shrub border for off-season flower and fruit; plants can be limbed up into multi-stem small trees, but diligence is required to control suckers.

**Other Comments:** The growth form on this species is not particularly desirable as a shrub or tree, tending to favor a rag-tag look when not in flower or perhaps fruit; the genus name derives from the Greek words "kleros" meaning lot or chance and "dendron" meaning tree; some attribute the references to chance to the varied medicinal properties of the genus, while others attribute it to associations with good or bad luck.

**Native Habitat:** China and Japan.

**Related Taxa:** This species may be more frequently represented in the trade by the cultivar 'Variegata' which has yellowish green margins on the variegated leaves; *Clerodendrum trichotomum* C.P. Thunberg

var. *fargesii* (L.A. Dode) A. Rehder (*Clerodendrum fargesii*) is more diminutive plant from China and Taiwan with smaller less pubescent foliage and more heavily scented flowers that is reported to be cold hardy into USDA zone 5; this form has not been widely tested in our region; the genus *Clerodendrum* L. contains many species which are of interest for subtropical and tropical landscapes and is sometimes spelled incorrectly as *Clerodendron*.

***Clerodendrum bungei*** E.G. von Steudel  
(*Clerodendrum foetidum*)

**Cashmere Bouquet**

- C Also known as French Hydrangea, Glory Flower, or Red Mexican Hydrangea; this 4N to 6N tall suckering seldom branched semi-evergreen subtropical shrub from China is sometimes grown along the immediate Gulf Coast or in deep South Texas; the large broadly ovate long petioled leaves are coarsely toothed and strongly scented when crushed; flowers are smaller than those of *C. trichotomum* but in larger erect panicles or corymbs; the inflorescences create an overall purplish pink to purplish red two-tone effect, to some folks eyes they are reminiscent of the flowers of *Hydrangea spp.*, although this is a debatable point; the flowers are highly scented, some think pleasantly so, others not.
- C *Clerodendrum bungei* is hardy to USDA zones 9b through 11 as shrubs, 8 (7b) to 9a as a herbaceous perennials or dieback shrubs; avoid droughty sites; plants can be invasive from suckers in favorable locations.
- C *Clerodendrum paniculatum* L., the Pagoda Flower, from Southeast Asia is similar in general form to *C. bungei*; although *C. paniculatum* has a similar large flower cluster, the individual flowers are somewhat smaller and more numerous; flowers are carmine pink to scarlet in color; hardy in zones 9b(9a) through 11.

***Clerodendrum speciosissimum*** A. Van Geert  
(*Clerodendrum fallax*)

**Java Glorybower**

- C Also known as Java Shrub or Scarlet Clerodendron; this medium to large subtropical shrub from Java is sometimes grown in deep South Texas or the immediate Gulf Coast; although potentially reaching 12N tall in the tropics, it is only hardy as a woody shrub in USDA zones 10 (9b) and 11; *Clerodendrum speciosissimum* is sometimes encountered as a dieback shrub or herbaceous perennial in USDA zones 8b and 9, or as a summer annual or conservatory plant in cooler regions; avoid droughty sites.
- C The leaves of this species are large, to 12 O long, cordate, velvety in texture, and medium to dark green in color; the primary attraction of *C. speciosissimum* is a large 8 O to 12 O long erect terminal panicle of red-pink to red flowers which is held about 6 O above the foliage.

***Clerodendrum splendens*** G. Don ex James

**Glorybower**

- C Also known as Bag Flower; this is a tweener species, not really a vine, but not a shrub; probably best treated as a vine that needs to be trained to a support; plants typically do not grow more than 10N to 12N tall/long; the handsome dark glossy green leaves with deeply impressed veins contrast nicely with the bright pink to bright red flowers; both the calyx and corolla of these 1 O flowers are pink or red; the calyx does not create a blader effect as much as with *C. thomsoniae*; individual flowers occur in 4 O to 6 O loose panicles scattered in amongst the foliage; the flower panicles are not held above the foliage, nor are they as large as those of *C. speciosissimum*; the individual flowers are more open than those of *C. thomsoniae*; the fruit clusters can be handsome with the red calyx persisting and the two-chambered fruit turning from green to blue-black.

- C *Clerodendrum splendens* is hardy in USDA zones 9 through 11 as a dieback perennial or woody plant; although this species survives in full sun, plants typically perform best with partial to moderate shade; plants are prone to produce root suckers; plants can be grown in well lit interiorscapes or in outdoor seasonal pots.

***Clerodendrum thomsoniae*** I.B. Balfour  
(*Clerodendrum balfourii*)

### **Bleeding Heart Vine**

- C Also known as Bag Flower, Bleeding Glorybower, Flower of Magic, Glory Tree, White Bleeding Heart, Secreto de Amor, and Tropical Bleeding Heart; this short tropical evergreen West African vine acts more like a sprawling shrub with weak leaning stems; the 40 to 60 long leaves are a nice glossy dark green color, but are rather sparsely borne on the stems; plants are primarily planted for the showy red flowers that are partially to mostly encased by a white inflated calyx; the flower clusters are 40 to 60 long; flowering occurs summer to frost or year-round in warmer climates.
- C Culture is similar to that of *C. splendens* and the species is hardy in USDA zones 10 (9) - 11 as a dieback perennial or woody plant.
- C Legend has it that the Bleeding Heart Vine originated from the fallen tears of a beautiful maiden who was jilted; when her lover returned, she was gone, but the bleeding heart shaped flowers remained; in Malaysia this species is believed to have magical powers for summoning spirits.
- C *Clerodendrum thomsoniae* is closely related to *C. splendens* and a hybrid of the two species, *Clerodendrum* × *speciosum* H.H. Dombrain, known as Java Glory Bean or Pagoda Flower, is often found in the trade; *Clerodendrum* × *speciosum* has both a reddish calyx and corolla as is found in *C. splendens*; this hybrid may be more common in Texas landscape than either parental species.
- C Both *C. thomsoniae* and *C. × speciosum* are suitable for use in well lit interiorscapes, large seasonal pots, or in hanging baskets.

**References:** Burras, 1994; Courtright, 1988; Dirr, 1998; Iverson, 1999; Odenwald and Turner, 1996; Riffle, 1998; Tripp and Raulston, 1997; Williams, 1998.

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