

Red Horse-chestnut

Aesculus x carnea

Sections N, 4

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The red horse-chestnut is a non-native tree that is a cross between two *Aesculus* species, the red buckeye (*A. pavia*) and horse-chestnut (*A. hippocastanum*). The red horse-chestnut tree first appeared in Germany ca. 1812, and is thought to be the result of insect enabled cross-pollination in the wild. It is a



Red Horse-chestnut tree

member of the *Sapindaceae* family. Other specimen of the *Aesculus* genus found in Cave Hill Cemetery are the Ohio Buckeye (*A. glabra*) in Section A; the Yellow Buckeye (*A. flava*) in Sections 12 and 18; the Bottlebrush Buckeye (*A. parviflora*) in Sections A and 18; and the Red Buckeye (*A. pavia*) in Sections F and 12.

The tree is an excellent medium sized (25-40 feet) shade tree, with deep rose-red flower clusters in May, and dark green leaves. The flowers are known to attract hummingbirds and bees, who are drawn to the rich color and cone-shaped flowers. In the fall, the tree produces a prickly pod that

contains a hard, shiny nut like a buckeye. Unlike a chestnut, however, the red horse-chestnut is poisonous and therefore inedible.

Red horse-chestnut trees like full sun to light shade and prefer acidic soil, but will tolerate a slightly alkaline soil. They are intolerant of drought conditions, and require watering when stressed. Generally grown from seed, the tree does not transplant well due to its large tap root. They are hardy in Zones 4 - 8.

There are two cultivars that are commonly found in North America:

Fort McNair red horse-chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea* 'Fort McNair') - 30 feet high and wide with a rounded form. Some resistance to leaf blotch. Pink flowers with yellow throats.

Ruby horse-chestnut (*Aesculus x carnea* 'Briotii') - 25 to 30 feet high with the same spread, this cultivar has dark rosy red flowers with yellow throats. The leaves have a red mid-rib.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/trees/horse-chestnut/red-horsechestnut-information.htm>

<https://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/66298/#b>

<https://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-plant-descriptions/red-horse-chestnut>