

Jatropha integerrima

Jatropha integerrima is an evergreen shrub or small tree. It is commonly known as Peregrina, Spicy Jatropha, Chaya, Firecracker, Firecracker Jatropha, Star of Bethlehem and belongs to the family Euphorbiaceae. Peregrina is native to West Indies, especially well known in Cuba, and cultivated worldwide. The genus name, *Jatropha* is derived from the Greek words for *physician* and *nutrition*, in reference to the use of various species in this genus for medicinal purposes. The species description comes from the Latin words *integer* meaning *entire, unbroken, or untoothed*, and *rimus* meaning *mostly so* or to the *greatest degree*, referring to this species having few lobed or toothed leaves. The leaves are glossy and flowers are star shaped red, pink or vermilion and appear in clusters. It has a rounded or narrow domed form and grows up to 4.6 m tall with a spread of about 3 m. The plant often grows shrub-like with several slender trunks. *Jatropha integerrima* can also be pruned into to a single trunk. The leaves are highly variable in form. Leaves may be entire and elliptic or oval, or they may be fiddle shaped, or they may have three sharp pointed lobes and are up to 7 inches long. Leaves are bronze when young and brownish on the undersides. The flowers are borne in many-flowered clusters at branch-ends, almost all year round and are about 1 inch across.

Propagation

Jatropha integerrima can be propagated from cuttings.

Soil and climate

It is tolerant to a wide variety of soils. Clayey, sandy, loamy, acidic or alkaline soil which are well drained is suitable for its growth. It blooms on current year's growth, hence pruning can be done at any time of the year. It adapts to pruning well and can be kept to shrub size, trained to a tree form or can be used in espalier system. It prefers full sun to partial shade for best growth and flowering. It tolerates full shade but flowering will be less under shade. It has low to moderate water requirements. It is considered to be drought tolerant. It grows easily with less maintenance.

Uses

It is an excellent ornamental perennial shrub or tree that blooms almost year round. It can be used as an accent or specimen or container plant in any garden. It serves as a lovely addition for the back of a sunny border. These bushes can be used to create an informal hedge or screen for privacy and even suitable for landscaping along highways when planted in mass. It attracts butterflies and birds to your garden.