

*Vitex trifolia*  
*purpurea* =  
Arabian Lilac  
“Fascination”

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Master Gardener Class of 2018





*Vitex*: To weave  
*trifolia* : three  
leaves  
*purpurea*:  
Purple!





Family: Lamiaceae – Mints

Genus : *Vitex*, from Linnaeus, from Latin word vicio, “to weave” as the soft shoots were used for basket weaving

Also carried by young virgins in processions in Roman culture to denote chastity, hence the common name “Chaste tree”.

Species: *trifolia*; three leaflets per compound leaf, borne on opposite stem sides.

Cultivar: *purpurea*: leaves are green on upper surface and beautiful purple underneath, slightly creased to reveal the purple undersides





Berries eaten  
by birds





# Origin: Southeast Asia, Australia, Coastal East Africa

Can be a shrub, tree or privacy screen, can be grown in containers

Will grow to 10-15 feet high and as wide

Hardy to 20 degrees; in our Mediterranean climate is an evergreen

Fast growth, requires pruning, but can be pruned to a bush or tree shape.

Drought tolerant once established

Full sun to partial shade

Tolerates almost any soil type

Attracts butterflies , honeybees, hummingbirds







# Aromatic, Useful, Beautiful!

Foliage is aromatic with a peppery scent

Leaves dramatic due to gorgeous, velvety purple undersides which contrast with other garden plants

Purple/blue flower spikes in mid to late summer resemble lilacs but are not true lilacs

Used in traditional medicine for Inflammation, arthritis, dysentery, ulcers

Leaves are burned in Samoa to deter mosquitos and are used to treat fevers.





# Unusual Uses:

## Bonsai !!

*Vitex trifolia* can be pruned as the gardener sees fit; large bushes, trees and hedges require regular pruning. As a tree, it tends to spread laterally up to 20 feet!

Great as a patio container plant and in "wild" landscapes









