**Bauhinia variegata**

**ORCHID TREE**

**Fabaceae**

Common Synonyms: *Phanera variegata*

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**FLEPPC Category:** 1  
**FDACS Listed Noxious Weed:** No  
**IFAS Assessment**  
North: OK  
Central: CAUTION  
South: INVASIVE

**USDA Hardiness Zone:** 9a-11  
**Growth Habit:** Shrub or tree  
**Origin:** Eastern Asia (India, China)

**Description:** Semi-deciduous tree up to 15 m tall. Leaves alternate, petioles up to 3 cm long, thin, cleft at apex with two rounded lobes. Blades have 11-13 veins extended from heart-shaped or round base. Showy flowers with fragrance, in multi-flowered clustered at or near stem tips. Flowerers during early spring (January-February) during leaf-fall. Flowerers are 5 petaled, with overlapping petals, magenta to indigo, with dark red and yellow on upper petal, and 5 stamens. Fruit flat, oblong pod with 10-15 seeds, 30 cm long.

Similar species include purple orchid tree (*Bauhinia purpurea*) which flowers in the fall before leaf-fall. The flowers on this species are clustered with many flowers with petals that are not overlapping, and have 3 stamens.

**Habitat:** Disturbed areas, hammock margins, occasionally in globally imperiled pine rocklands

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**Florida Introduction Date:** 1936  
**Control Methods:** Mechanical: May be controlled through the use of prescribed fire.  
Chemical: Basal bark (10% trichlopyr ester), cut stump (50% trichlopyr amine). [IFAS].

**Useful Resources:**

**Comments:** Seeds remain viable for over a year. Prefers to grow in full sun conditions or partial shade.

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This report generated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory - www.fnai.org - August 2018