

Buddleja davidii

[Synonyms : *Buddleia davidii*, *Buddleia variabilis*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *alba*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *glabrescens*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *magnifica*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *manhoensis*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *superba*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *veitchiana*, *Buddleja davidii* var. *wilsonii*, *Buddleja shaanxiensis*, *Buddleja shimidzuana*, *Buddleja striata*, *Buddleja striata* var. *zhouquensis*, *Buddleja variabilis*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *magnifica*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *nanhoensis*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *prostrata*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *superba*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *veitchiana*, *Buddleja variabilis* var. *wilsonii*]

BUTTERFLY BUSH is a deciduous shrub. Native to China it has small fragrant, orange centred, usually lilac or purple flowers.

It is also known as Buddlebush, *Buddleia*, *Budleja* (Czech), *Bwdleia* (Welsh), *Da ye zui yu cao* (Chinese), *Flieder* (German), *Gewöhnlicher Sommerflieder* (German), *Herbstflieder* (German), *Komule davidova* (Czech), Orange-eye buddleia, Orange-eye butterfly-bush, Orange-eyed butterfly-bush, *Schmetterlingstrauch* (German), *Sommerflieder* (German), Summer lilac, *Syrenbuddleja* (Swedish), *Syrikkä* (Finnish), *Syussyreeni* (Finnish), and Violet butterfly bush.

Davidii commemorates a French Lazarist missionary and naturalist, Père Armand David (1826-1900). After his ordination in 1862 he was eventually sent to Beijing and is said to have been rigorous in maintaining his religious duties and obeying the Order's rules. Yet despite these demands he managed to find time for his interest in zoology, botany, geology and palaeontology and the Paris botanical garden (Jardin des Plantes) eventually commissioned him to make journeys of discovery on their behalf. His specimens included over 1000 animals, birds and plants, a significant number of which were unknown to Europeans at that time and his travels took him as far afield from the Chinese capital as Mongolia, Tibet and central China (as well as to the north of China and to the western provinces). The most striking of his zoological discoveries for the non-naturalist were probably the giant panda and Père David's deer. Authorities note that his botanical specimens included new species of about 40 of the *Primulae* genus, over that number of gentians and at least 52 new rhododendrons.

The seeds eventually sent home in 1893 by Father Jean André Soulié were the first to be successfully cultivated in western Europe. (Soulie was a French missionary and botanist, who met a violent end to his life in 1905 when he was tortured and shot by Tibetan monks.) In 1896 butterfly bush arrived at the Botanic Gardens, Kew (via the Jardin des Plantes).

Although in western Europe the butterfly bush, as its name implies, is most associated with the butterflies it attracts in profusion, it was reported in the late 19th Century that in its native habitat its thickets were infamous for harbouring leopards.