Firefly Firebush
*Hamelia patens* ‘Firefly’

Plant Description:

‘Firefly’ is a cultivar of the Florida native Firebush, *Hamelia patens*. This plant is similar to the species, but in compact form with leaves and flowers about half the normal size. Orange-red tubular flowers cover the plant most of the year, and are followed by black berries and foliage that turns a bronze-orange color in fall. This soft-stemmed shrub makes a nice specimen or accent, and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds to the landscape.

**Mature Size:** 3 – 5 feet

**Growth Rate:** Fast

**Plant Habit:** Upright/Spreading

**Plant Spacing:** 36-60 inches

Ornamental Characteristics & Uses:

**Foliage Color:** Green

**Flower Color:** Orange-Red

**Bloom Time:** Spring – Fall

**Attracts Wildlife:** Flowers attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds; fruit attracts birds

**Uses:** Landscape specimen or accent; mixed border; mass planting
**Growing Requirements:**

**Cold Hardiness Zone(s):** 9 – 11

**Exposure:** Full Sun – Shade

**Water Needs:** Normal

**Soil Tolerances:** Moderate Drought Tolerance; Tolerates Occasionally Wet Soils

**Soil pH:** Acidic or Alkaline

**Maintenance:** Low – Moderate

**General Care & Growing Tips:**

Firebush flowers best in full sun, but foliage is usually more attractive when grown in shade. Fertilize sparingly and mulch the root zone to keep out competing grass and weeds. It can take heat and drought, but may require supplemental irrigation from time to time. This native shrub is quite tender in North Florida and is killed to the ground during winter. It has proven to be root hardy through zone 9, so consider planting it in a slightly protected location here in Baker County (zone 8b) which tends to experience colder weather. Keeping the roots mulched may also help this plant survive the winter. For colder locations, this plant still serves very well as an annual. Propagated cuttings can be over-wintered and replanted year to year as desired.

**Common Pests:**

No insects or diseases are of major concern. Watch for aphids on new spring growth and occasional attacks of scales or mites, which may require control measures.


**Photo Credit:** Alicia Lamborn