AMERICAN SMOKETREE CARE

LIGHT

American smoketree (Cotinus obovatus) grows best in full sun, though partial shade is tolerated. Plan for a substantial shrub or small tree, not a compact foundation plant. Allow space for its mature crown and choose the location with long-term size in mind.

WATER

Water thoroughly after planting and check the original root ball regularly through establishment. Water deeply during prolonged drought, allowing excess moisture to drain away. Established plants tolerate some dryness, but young trees still need attention. Avoid chronically wet, low-lying sites.

SOIL & PLANTING

Plant at nursery depth in well-drained soil. American smoketree tolerates a range of soils and pH, including rocky ground. Keep the root flare at the soil surface and mulch the surrounding root zone, leaving a clear gap around the trunk or stem bases.

FEEDING

Heavy fertilization is unnecessary and can be detrimental. Use a soil test and apply modest fertilizer only if a need is confirmed. Check drainage, moisture and planting depth before treating weak growth with nutrients. Avoid trying to force rapid growth with extra nitrogen.

SEASONAL CARE

Preserve a sound tree or large-shrub framework. Remove dead, damaged or crossing branches selectively, and retain the trunk and main crown on tree-form plants. Do not automatically use the annual hard-cut foliage routine sometimes applied to cultivated smokebush. Seek advice before major structural pruning.

HELPFUL TIPS

The airy summer smoke display and autumn foliage are key features. Wear gloves when pruning and handling sap. Persistent wilt or branch dieback needs diagnosis rather than repeated watering. This guide is separate from Cotinus coggygria and common ornamental hybrids.