Aesculus parviflora, commonly called bottlebrush buckeyes, are related to other buckeyes and horsechestnuts (all in the genus Aesculus). The small, white flowers make up long fluffy twelve-inch panicles (pyramidal loosely branched flower clusters that look like bottlebrushes) and bloom in early July. The flower spikes are a spectacular sight to behold and attract many native bees and butterflies. The scientific name *parviflora*, from Carl Linnaeus, is from the Latin “parvus” meaning small and “flora” meaning flower, thus “little flower.” The plant’s common name comes from the flowers resemblance to the kitchen tool.
Bottlebrush buckeye is a native plant and grows naturally from Alabama and Georgia up to Pennsylvania and New York. While most Aesculus species are trees, the bottlebrush buckeye is a large, dense, wide-spreading shrub, growing only about twelve feet tall. It spreads by suckers, which are new shoots sent up from roots. In late summer the flowers turn into brown fruit capsule-like husks with a beautiful smooth, glossy chestnut-brown ‘buckeye’ seed inside. Buckeye refers to the way the scar in the center of the brown nut resembles the eye of a buck. Squirrels love the seeds, but they are poisonous to humans. The course, large, dark green palmately compound leaves with five- seven leaflets turns a rich golden yellow in the fall.

Did you know? The plant at the Arboretum with the biggest “footprint” is a bottlebrush buckeye. It is 125 years old and measures over 100 feet across!