



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Tibouchina granulosa*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This sprawling, evergreen shrub or small ornamental tree ranges from 10 to 15 feet (20 feet with proper training) in height. Older trees become much wider. It is the easiest *Tibouchina* to train into a tree. It can be trimmed to any size and still put on a vivid flower display. The dark green, velvety, 4 to 6-inch-long leaves have several prominent longitudinal veins. Large, royal purple blossoms, flaring open to 2 inches, are held on terminal panicles above the foliage, creating a spectacular sight when in full bloom. Some flowers are open throughout the year but they are especially plentiful from May to January.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Tibouchina granulosa*

**Pronunciation:** tib-oo-KYE-nuh gran-yoo-LOW-suh

**Common name(s):** Purple Glory Tree

**Family:** *Melastomataceae*

**Plant type:** tree

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 1)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** near a deck or patio; screen; specimen; container or above-ground planter; trained as a standard

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

### Description

**Height:** 15 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 20 feet

**Plant habit:** round; irregular outline or silhouette

**Plant density:** dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** serrulate

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** purple

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; summer flowering; fall flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; no thorns  
**Current year stem/twig color:** green  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; acidic; well-drained; sand; loam  
**Drought tolerance:**  
**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown  
**Plant spacing:** not applicable

**Other**

**Roots:** usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**

Purple Glory-Tree is ideal for the mixed shrubby border or can be used in small groupings to compound the impact of bloom-time. Trees can become nicely shaped with some early pruning to provide for strong, upright trunks. The canopy will need to be pruned regularly to keep lower branches from drooping to the ground.

Full sun is best for flowering and the plant will thrive on any well-drained soil when regularly watered. Its growth habit is somewhat weedy, requiring training and pruning especially when it is young to develop and maintain it as a tree. It can be trained as a standard or espaliered against a south or west-facing wall receiving at least 5 hours of full sun. It can also be trained on a trellis or arbor as a vine. Pinching new growth helps increase branching and will enhance the flower display on small plants.

Propagation is by cuttings.

**Pests and Diseases**

Scales and nematodes can limit growth. Mushroom root rot can occur in soil which is kept too wet.