



Caesalpinia pulcherrima Dwarf Poinciana¹

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INTRODUCTION

Brilliant scarlet and yellow flowers, feathery foliage, and quick growth make Dwarf Poinciana a popular evergreen shrub (Fig. 1). It is hard to find a more attractive flower. Also known as Barbados Flower-Fence, this open-branched, fine-textured shrub will tolerate hot, dry areas, and forms an effective thorny barrier. It flowers year-round with peak displays in spring and fall.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*
Pronunciation: sez-al-PIN-ee-uh pul-KAIR-ih-muh
Common name(s): Dwarf Poinciana, Barbados Flowerfence
Family: *Leguminosae*
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: reclamation plant; specimen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

DESCRIPTION

Height: 8 to 12 feet
Spread: 10 to 12 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: round
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

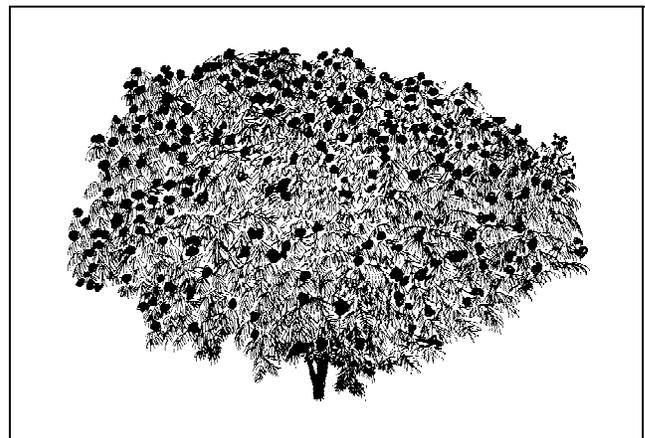


Figure 1. Middle-aged Dwarf Poinciana.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: bipinnately compound; even pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong
Leaflet venation: pinnate; reticulate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaflet blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: orange; red; yellow
Flower characteristics: very showy; year round flowering

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; thorns are present on the trunk or branches
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break
Current year twig color: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Full sun is preferred for best flowering but some shade is tolerated. Any soil is suitable as long as it is well-drained. Dwarf Poinciana is perfectly suited to informal plantings. This is a beautiful, refreshing

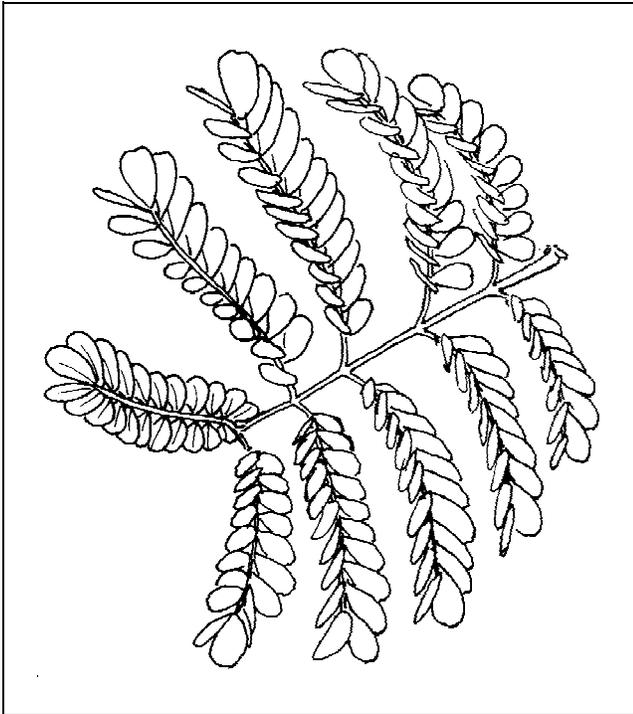


Figure 3. Foliage of Dwarf Poinciana.

addition to any garden or yard as a specimen or as an accent toward the middle or back of a shrub border. Tipping the branches during the growing season creates a fuller shrub and more flowers. With some training and pruning, you can create a small, 12 to 15-foot-tall multistemmed tree, but the natural form is a low branched, full, widespreading shrub about 10 feet tall and wide. Allow plenty of room for this plant to develop as a shrub.

Propagation is by seed which germinate faster if scarified or soaked in hot water.

Pests

Scale will present an occasional problem.

Diseases

Dwarf Poinciana is susceptible to mushroom root rot, especially in poorly-drained soil.