



Jacaranda mimosifolia 'Alba' 'Alba' Jacaranda¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Soft, delicate, fernlike, deciduous foliage and dense terminal clusters of pure white, lightly fragrant, trumpet-shaped flowers make this large, spreading tree an outstanding specimen planting (Fig. 1). The striking blooms can appear any time from April through August (most often May), and are sometimes present before the fresh, new, light green leaves appear in spring. Flowering is reportedly best following a winter with several nights in the upper 30's. Jacaranda may flower best when grown in poor soil. Jacarandas can reach 25 to 40 feet in height with an equal or greater spread, and the bent or arching trunks are covered with light grey bark.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Jacaranda mimosifolia* 'Alba'

Pronunciation: jack-uh-RAN-duh
mih-moe-sih-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): 'Alba' Jacaranda

Family: *Bignoniaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 1. Mature 'Alba' Jacaranda.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 40 feet

Spread: 45 to 60 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: spreading; vase shape

Crown density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: bipinnately compound; odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: obovate; rhomboid
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaflet blade length: less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: irregular; pod
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
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; gray
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: none

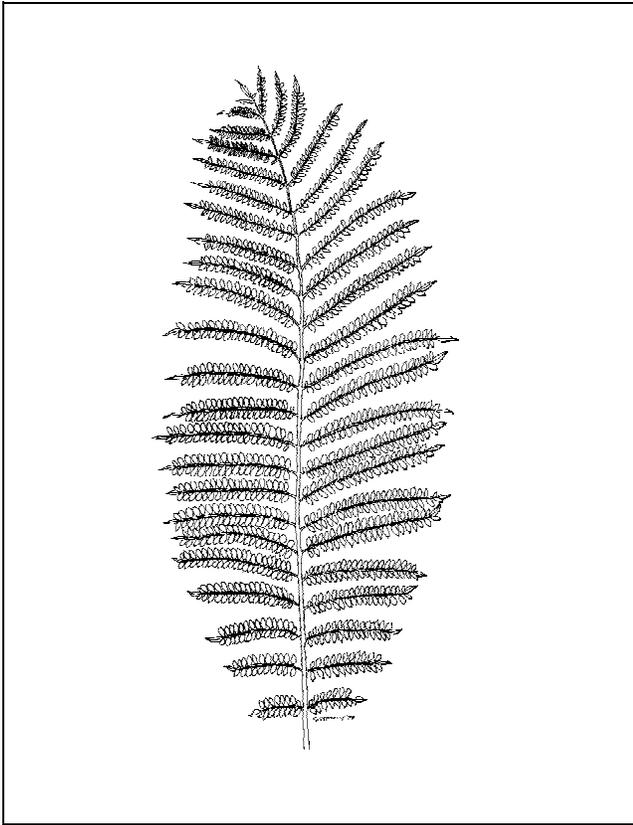


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Alba' Jacaranda.

Heaviest-flowering when grown in full sun, small trees of Jacaranda can tolerate light shade and will grow quickly. They thrive in sandy, well-drained soils but should be watered during dry periods. Prune branches so they remain less than half the diameter of the trunk to help keep the plant intact and increase durability.

Propagation is by softwood cuttings or grafting. Seedlings often take a long time to bloom so grafted trees or those rooted from cuttings are preferred.

Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

Mushroom root rot is a problem on poorly-drained soil.

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

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

The light, dappled shade makes Jacaranda well-suited for cooling patios, but it probably should not be used near pools due to the abundant leaf and flower drop. Jacaranda makes an ideal street tree, creating a spectacular sight when in full bloom. The arching branch habit is ideal for creating a canopy over a street or boulevard. Be sure to plant only those trees which have one central trunk and major limbs well-spaced apart for street tree and other high-use areas. Unpruned trees can become hazardous as they split apart at the crotches. Once properly trained and pruned, Jacaranda is fairly strong-wooded and less messy than Royal Poinciana.