



Tamarindus indica Tamarind¹

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INTRODUCTION

A frost-tender, tropical, evergreen tree, Tamarind is densely foliated with pale green, compound, feathery leaflets which give the broad, spreading crown a light, airy effect (Fig. 1). Tamarind may reach heights of 65 feet and a spread of 50 feet but is more often seen smaller. The delicate leaflets cast a diffuse, dappled shade which will allow enough sunlight to penetrate for a lawn to thrive beneath this upright, dome-shaped tree.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Tamarindus indica*

Pronunciation: tam-uh-RIN-dus IN-dih-kuh

Common name(s): Tamarind

Family: *Leguminosae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10 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); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 60 feet

Spread: 40 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round; vase shape

Crown density: dense

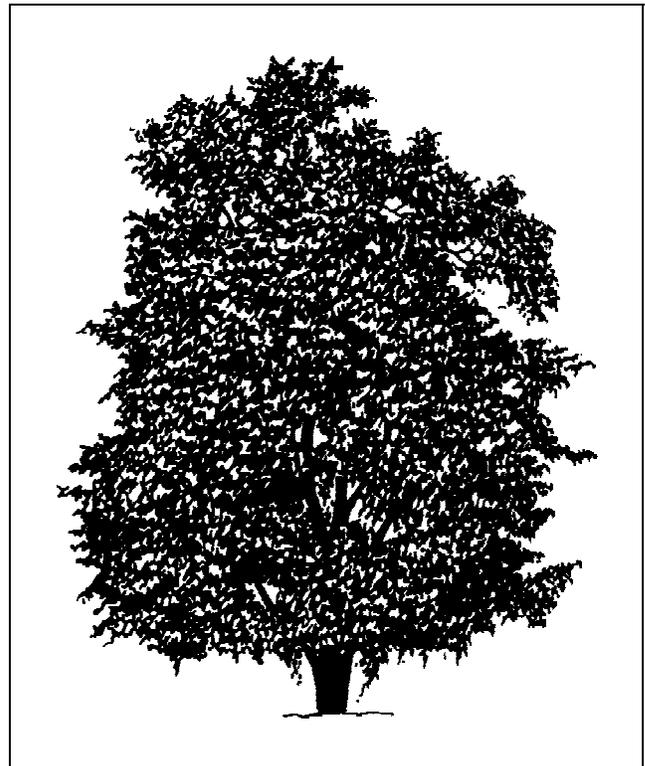


Figure 1. Middle-aged Tamarind.

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: even pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-618, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaflet venation: pinnate

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: red; yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; suited for human consumption; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: 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: resistant

Current year twig color: green; gray

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

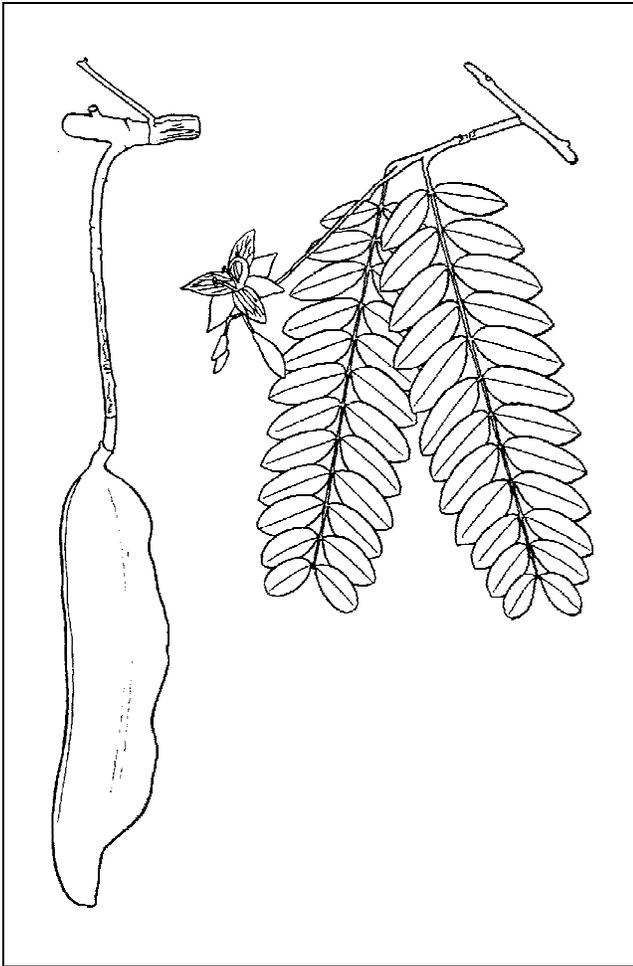


Figure 3. Foliage of Tamarind.

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The twigs and branches of Tamarind are very resistant to wind, making it especially useful as a shade or street tree for breezy locations. But Tamarind has low salt-tolerance so do not locate it close to the beach. In spring, small red and yellow flowers appear on short racemes and are followed by the production of brittle, brown, six-inch-long, velvety pods. These sticky pods are filled with a sweet-sour, dark brown paste which surrounds two or three seeds. They normally dry up and do not become messy but some people will undoubtedly object to the fruit falling on sidewalks or streets. Tamarind is grown commercially in the tropics for production of this edible paste, which is used as an ingredient for Worcestershire sauce, soft drinks, chutneys, and curries.

Tamarind should be grown only in frost-free regions in full sun on moist, fertile, sandy soil. It survived 26 degrees for several hours in West Palm Beach in the mid-1980s. Care should be taken in the placement of Tamarind as the seed pods may be messy for a short period when they drop on hard surfaces. Also be sure to maintain a strong tree structure including major branches well-spaced along one central trunk.

Propagation is by seeds which germinate readily or by cuttings. If quality fruit is desired, plants should be air-layered, grafted, or shield-budded.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.