**Tamarindus indica**

Tamarind

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: even pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong

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

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

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.