Terminalia catappa
Tropical-Almond

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

INTRODUCTION

Tropical-Almond is a 30 to 55-foot-tall, deciduous tree which forms a symmetrical, upright silhouette in youth with horizontal branches reaching 35 feet in width (Fig. 1). The branches are arranged in obvious tiers, giving the tree a pagoda-like shape. As the tree grows older, the crown spreads and flattens on the top to form a wide-spaying vase shape. The large, 12-inch-long and six-inch-wide, glossy green, leathery leaves change to beautiful shades of red, yellow, and purple before dropping in winter. Due to their large size, these old leaves may be considered a nuisance to some people. The leaves are quickly replaced by new growth so the tree is bare for only a short period of time. The inconspicuous, greenish-white, springtime blossoms appear in six-inch-long terminal clusters and are followed by the edible fruits. These drupes are 2.5 inches long and mature from green to yellow or red during the summer. The outside husk is corky fiber with an inner thin green flesh. The inside holds the edible, almond-like kernel. The fruit is high in tannic acid and this could stain cars, pavement and sidewalks. It also causes significant litter on the ground.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Terminalia catappa
Pronunciation: ter-mih-NAIL-ee-uh kuh-TAP-uh
Common name(s): Tropical-Almond, India-Almond
Family: Combretaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 45 feet
Spread: 35 to 50 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: spreading; pyramidal
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: medium
Texture: coarse
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
**Leaf type:** simple
**Leaf margin:** entire
**Leaf shape:** obovate
**Leaf venation:** banchidodrome; pinnate
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches
**Leaf color:** green
**Fall color:** red
**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** green
**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** elongated; oval
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard
**Fruit color:** tan

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

**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; 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; green
**Current year twig thickness:** stout; thick
USE AND MANAGEMENT

The tree may be best suited for planting along the coast as a park or shade tree providing dense shade. People may object to the large leaves and the fruit that falls from the tree if the tree is used as a street tree, and the tannic acid may be a problem near parked cars. Branches droop and require regular maintenance to keep them pruned to allow for vehicle clearance beneath the canopy. However, it would make a nice tree for a median or along a boulevard where this would cause less of a nuisance.

Tropical-Almond should be grown in full sun on any well-drained soil. Plants are quite tolerant of wind, salt, and drought but do need protection from freezing temperatures. Trees perform best if mulched and regularly fertilized.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

Thrips are a pest of this tree.

Diseases

Leaf spot disease is a problem with this tree.

Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light requirement:</th>
<th>tree grows in full sun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil tolerances:</td>
<td>clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought tolerance:</td>
<td>high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aerosol salt tolerance:</td>
<td>high</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roots:</th>
<th>surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter interest:</td>
<td>tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding tree:</td>
<td>not particularly outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invasive potential:</td>
<td>No entries found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest resistance:</td>
<td>long-term health usually not affected by pests</td>
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