



Dalbergia sissoo Indian Rosewood¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

A handsome specimen, shade, framing, or street tree, easily-grown semi-evergreen Indian Rosewood has delicate, light green, oval pointed leaflets and can quickly reach 60 feet in height with a 40-foot spread (Fig. 1). The inconspicuous, very fragrant, white flowers are followed by slender, flat, brown, one to four-seeded pods. The trunks yield a prized cabinet wood for fine furniture and the Rosewood genus is an important timber tree in India. There are many *Dalbergia* spp. grown in the tropical regions of the world for veneer and lumber. Though the wood is beautiful, the tree has a reputation for being brittle. Some of this may be due to improper pruning practices or inadequate training when the tree is young. Be sure that lateral branches remain smaller than two-thirds the trunk diameter to help ensure good tree structure. Remove branches with embedded bark in favor of those with strong, 'U'-shaped crotches. This could help keep the tree together in windstorms.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Dalbergia sissoo*

Pronunciation: dal-BERG-ee-uh SIS-oo

Common name(s): Indian Rosewood

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); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); shade tree; residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown

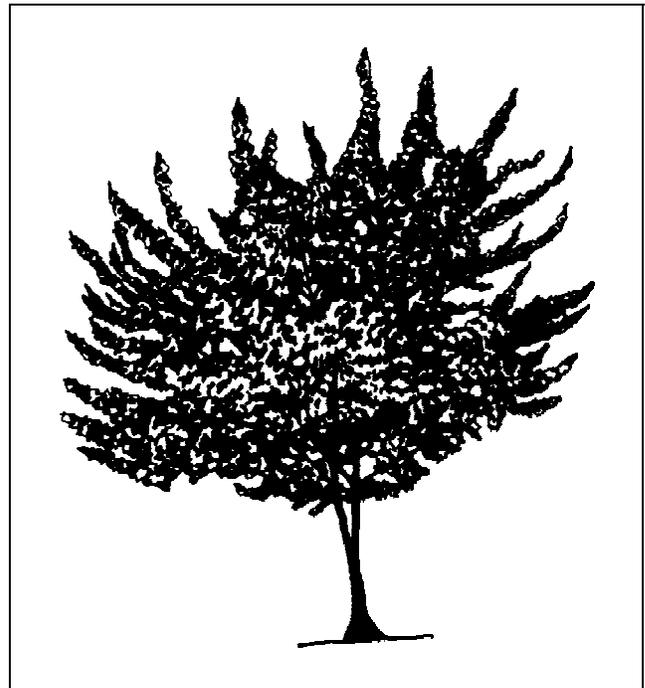


Figure 1. Middle-aged Indian Rosewood.

in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 45 to 60 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: oval

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2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: odd pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); orbiculate

Leaflet venation: banchidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: semievergreen

Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches; 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; 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; not particularly showy; 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; green

Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

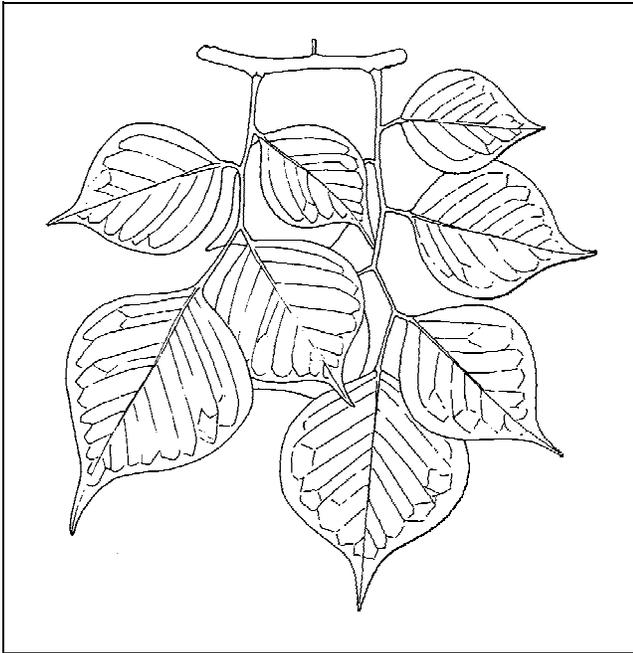


Figure 3. Foliage of Indian Rosewood.

tree. The tree casts light shade due to the open canopy.

Propagation is by seed, which germinates better if planted when still within the pod.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Magnesium deficiency is common.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: No entries found.

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing quickly in full sun or high shifting shade, Indian Rosewood will thrive on a variety of soils types, from dry to wet but is not particularly salt-tolerant. Young plants should be watered until well-established. Plants train easily into a well-formed single leader tree, which is desirable in urban landscapes. Sprouts often develop from the roots and become a maintenance problem and roots often lift sidewalks if planted too close. Surface roots often grow large in diameter and can become a nuisance. A number of horticulturists consider this to be a nuisance