



Tabebuia caraiba Trumpet Tree¹

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INTRODUCTION

An ideal patio, specimen, or lawn tree, the *Tabebuia*s are small, 15 to 25-foot tall, evergreen trees with silvery foliage and deeply furrowed, silvery bark on picturesque, contorted branches and trunk (Fig. 1). The crown is usually asymmetrical with two or three major trunks or branches dominating the crown. During late winter and sporadically throughout the year, they put on a brilliant display composed of a multitude of two to three-inch-long, golden yellow, trumpet-shaped blooms borne in terminal flower clusters. The leaves often drop just before the flowers appear.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Tabebuia caraiba*

Pronunciation: tab-eh-BOO-yuh kuh-RYE-buh

Common name(s): Trumpet Tree

Family: *Bignoniaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; 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); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

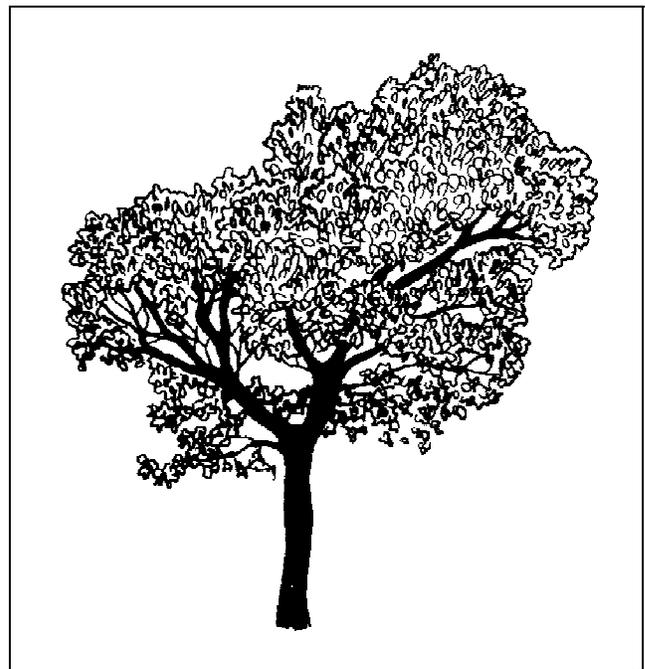


Figure 1. Mature Trumpet Tree.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: oval

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** palmately compound
- Leaflet margin:** entire; undulate
- Leaflet shape:** elliptic (oval); oblong
- Leaflet venation:** pinnate
- Leaf type and persistence:** semievergreen
- Leaflet blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** silver
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** yellow
- Flower characteristics:** spring flowering; very showy; winter flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** elongated; pod
- Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches; 3 to 6 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:** 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
- Current year twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** high
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

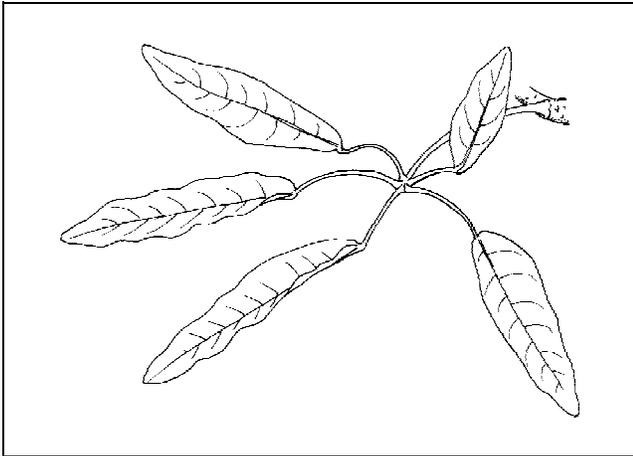


Figure 3. Foliage of Trumpet Tree.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

A native of tropical America, Trumpet Tree can be grown in full sun or partial shade on any reasonably fertile soil with moderate moisture. Trees should be protected from frost. Although some will leaf out following a freeze, the tree is often weakened and grows poorly. The wood becomes brittle with age and can break easily in strong winds but this is not usually a problem since trees are small with an open canopy and should not be cause to eliminate this beautiful tree from your tree palette. To the contrary, it is one of the most beautiful trees in flower which has a place in most landscapes.

The pink Trumpet Tree (*Tabebuia heterophylla*) is the one most suited for street tree planting since it is reportedly more sturdy and durable than *Tabebuia caraiba*. *Tabebuia impetigenosa* and *Tabebuia umbellata* are hardy to zone 9b with pink flowers borne on bare branches.

Propagation is by seed or layering.