



Simarouba glauca Paradise-Tree¹

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INTRODUCTION

The pinnately compound, 16-inch leaves of Paradise-Tree have multiple, three-inch-long, shiny, leathery, oblong leaflets which are reddish when young (Fig. 1). An upright tree when young, Paradise-Tree ultimately reaches 50 feet in height with a 30-foot spread and creates a dense, rounded crown at maturity. The tiny, inconspicuous, yellowish, springtime blooms on this frost-sensitive tree are followed by small clusters of dark purple, one-inch-long, edible fruits. Although Paradise-Tree produces desirable shade, the seeds and fruits are messy and will stain hard surfaces, and the shallow surface roots are troublesome to sidewalks and driveways and make it difficult to operate a lawn mower beneath the canopy.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Simarouba glauca*

Pronunciation: sim-uh-ROO-buh GLAW-kuh

Common name(s): Paradise-Tree

Family: *Simaroubaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 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: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

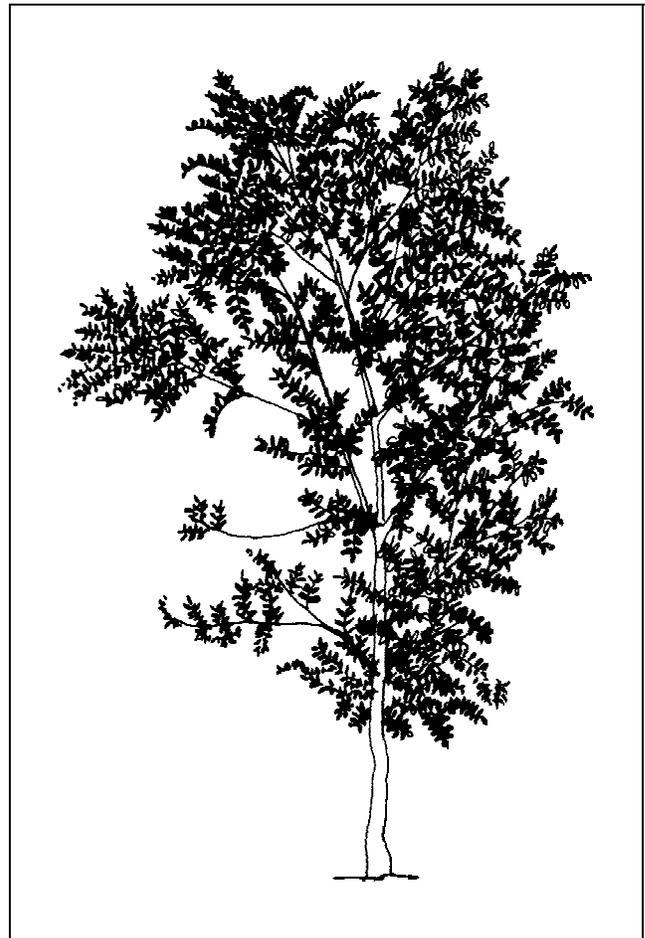


Figure 1. Young Paradise-Tree.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 50 feet

Spread: 25 to 30 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-590, 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.

Crown shape: round; upright

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: even pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: oblong; obovate

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: purple

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; suited for human consumption; 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; 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

Current year twig thickness: thick

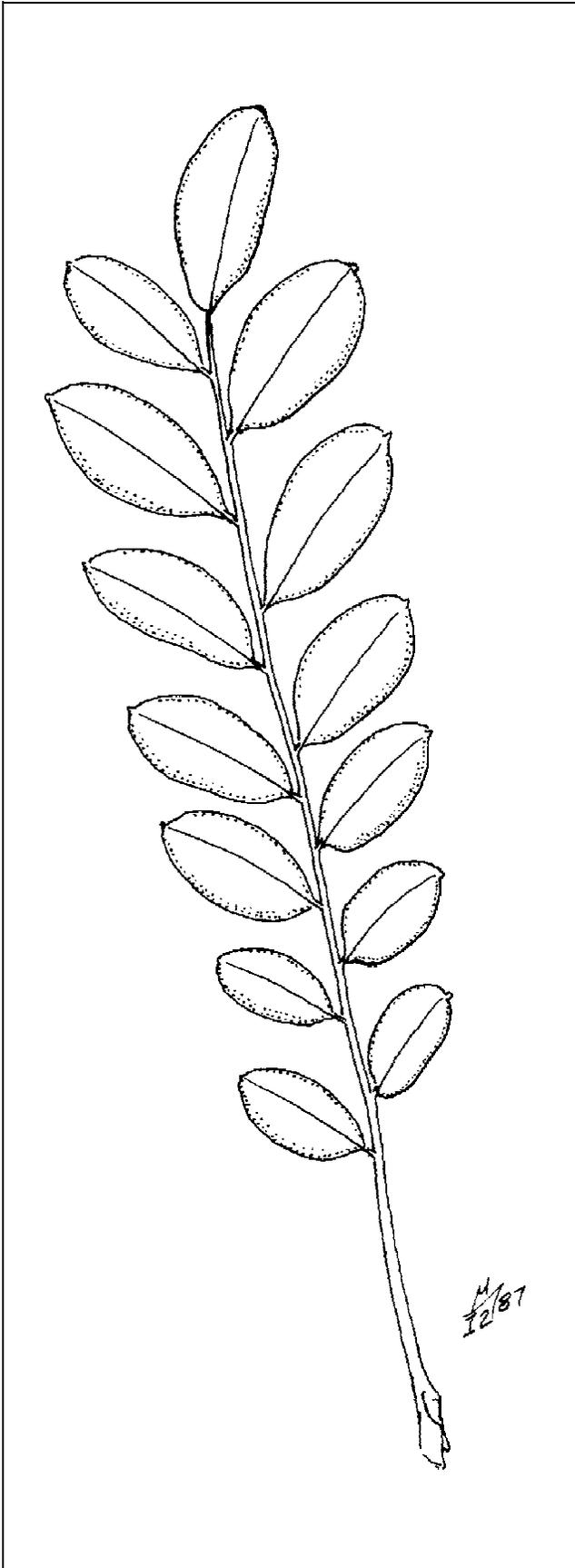


Figure 3. Foliage of Paradise-Tree.

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: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere
with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the
tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The coarse leaf texture and light green, compound foliage allows this tree to "stand out" in a crowd. It could be used as a boulevard or median street tree. Plant them on 25 to 30 foot centers to form a solid canopy above.

Paradise-Tree grows in full sun or partial shade on almost any well-drained soil. A native to south Florida, it will grow quickly on rich soils high in organic matter and should be protected from frost. Large trees are reportedly difficult to establish from containers, but there are no scientific studies supporting this notion.

Propagation is by seed, which germinate easily and rapidly. Young plants or seedlings are easily transplanted.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.