

Tree Species No. TTS18

Delonix regia, Family Caesalpiniaceae

Delonix regia is a deciduous, fast growing, perennial tree that is renowned for its attractive green foliage and scarlet flowers. It is a nodulating tree and therefore has potential for use as a nitrogen fixing plant. The flowers have considerable insecticidal properties and are known to control beetles, caterpillars, *Stophilus oryzae*, and weevils.

Synonyms: *Poinciana regia*.

Common names: Flamboyante, flame of the forest, poinciana.

Distribution: It is native to Madagascar but has now been introduced to most tropical areas, including, South Africa, Zambia, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya amongst others.

Ecology

Rainfall: 750-3000mm.

Altitude: 0-1000m.

Soil type: Prefers sandy-loam soils that are well drained.

Botany

Height: 12-15m.

Crown: Spreading.

Flowers: Scarlet, appearing in summer after the tree has reached five years.

Fruit: Dark brown, hard pods up to 60cm long.

Uses

Main: *D. regia* is a nitrogen-fixing tree and therefore is useful for soil enrichment. It is commonly used as an ornamental tree because of its attractive foliage and scarlet flowers.

Others: The fruits are edible and the wood can be used as fuel.

Cultural instructions

Grow from seed in the field or in a nursery. They can also be reproduced from cuttings and stumps.

Seeds: There are approximately 2200 seeds per kg and can be stored for several years.

Pre-treatment: The seeds should be pre-treated by soaking in sulphuric acid for three hours, alternatively, immerse in boiling water for 10 seconds then soak in cold-tepid water for 24 hours. This should increase germination significantly.

Germination: The germination rate can vary between 35 and 75%.

Spacing: The trees need plenty of room due to its spreading canopy.

Other

Limitations: *D. regia* has only a superficial rooting system any therefore is susceptible to wind damage and unsuitable for exposed hilly sites. The wood is soft and weak limiting its use in carpentry and is also subject to termite attack.

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