



Delonix regia Royal Poinciana¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This many-branched, broad, spreading, flat-crowned deciduous tree is well-known for its brilliant display of red-orange bloom, literally covering the tree tops from May to July (Fig. 1). There is nothing like a Royal Poinciana (or better yet, a group of them) in full bloom. The fine, soft, delicate leaflets afford dappled shade during the remainder of the growing season, making Royal Poinciana a favorite shade tree or freestanding specimens in large, open lawns. The tree is often broader than tall, growing about 40 feet high and 60 feet wide. Trunks can become as large as 50 inches or more in diameter. Eighteen-inch-long, dark brown seed pods hang on the tree throughout the winter, then fall on the ground in spring creating a nuisance.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Delonix regia*

Pronunciation: dee-LOE-nicks REE-jee-uh

Common name(s): Royal Poinciana

Family: *Leguminosae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: reclamation plant; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown 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



Figure 1. Mature Royal Poinciana.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 40 feet

Spread: 40 to 60 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: spreading; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: bipinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire

Leaflet shape: oblong

Leaf type and persistence: semievergreen

Leaflet blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-228, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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.