

## Tecoma stans

(L.) H. B. K.

Bignoniaceae

### LOCAL NAMES

Arabic (tacoma); Creole (chevalye,flé senpié,zeb sennikola); English (ginger thomas,tecoma,trumpetflower,yellow bells,yellow bignonia,yellow cedar,yellow elder,yellow trumpet tree); French (Tecoma jaune,herbe de St. Nicholas,fleur de St. Pierre,chevalier); German (Aufrechte Trompetenwinde); Italian (Tecoma giallo); Spanish (saúco amarillo,roble amarillo); Tamil (sonapatti)

### BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

*Tecoma stans* is a shrub or small tree, 5-7.6 m in height. Bark is pale brown to grey and roughens with age.

Leaves are compound and imparipinnate with 2 to 5 pairs of leaflets and a larger single terminal leaflet. Leaflets are lanceolate, up to 10 cm long, with serrated margins, mid-green above and soft to the touch.

Flowers occur in clusters at the ends of the branches and are trumpet shaped with 5 rounded lobes, 6 cm long, pale to bright yellow, with faint orange stripes at the throat.

Fruits are narrow, slightly flattened to pointed capsules, up to 20 cm long, containing many winged seeds; green when young, pale brown on ripening and remain on the tree in untidy clusters for many months.

The generic name is derived from the Mexican word for the plant, *tecomnaxochitl*, which means 'vessel-flower' and refers to the large, cup-shaped or trumpet-shaped blooms. The specific name means 'erect' in Latin.

### BIOLOGY

Where it occurs naturally, *T. stans* is probably pollinated by humming birds.



Flowers at Deering Park  
Florida (Forest and Kim Starr)



Flowers at Deering Park  
Florida (Forest and Kim Starr)



*Tecoma stans* tree at the Nairobi Arboretum  
(AFT team)

**ECOLOGY**

The drought-resistant trees are intolerant to frost and are light demanders.

**BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS**

Altitude: 0-2 000 m, Mean annual rainfall: 600-1 100 mm, Mean annual temperature: 20-32 deg.C

Soil type: The species prefers clay loams, but tolerates most types of soils and is particularly tolerant of alkaline conditions.

**DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION**

Native: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Surinam, Uruguay, Venezuela

Exotic: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, US



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

**PRODUCTS**

Fuel: Trees provide firewood and charcoal.

Timber: Wood is used in the construction of buildings.

Medicine: Leaf infusion can be taken orally for diabetes and stomach pains; a strong leaf and root decoction is taken orally as a diuretic, to treat syphilis or for intestinal worms.

**SERVICES**

Shade or shelter: *T. stans* provides useful shade, especially in gardens.

Ornamental: The species is valued as an amenity tree by virtue of its many yellow trumpet-shaped flowers.

Boundary or barrier or support: Trees can be planted as a live hedge.

**TREE MANAGEMENT**

T. stans is a fast-growing tree that is easily raised and fairly drought resistant. Trees can perform well in areas of less than the recommended rainfall but need to be irrigated; they can also grow at higher altitudes than recommended, but is then said to be slow in flowering. Young plants need irrigation and protection from livestock, but once established, they can survive well on irregular watering and care. In frost-prone areas, trees are spaced 1.2 m apart and in warm climates, 2.4 m apart.

**GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT**

Seed storage behaviour is orthodox, and seeds can be stored for long periods under ideal conditions.

**FURTHER READING**

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**SUGGESTED CITATION**

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