

Delonix regia (Poinciana regia)

Caesalpinioideae

Madagascar

Common names: Eng: flamboyant; **Swah:** mkakaya.

Ecology: Now very rare in its native Madagascar. However, this deciduous tree is grown throughout the lowland tropics. It prefers sandy soils. In Tanzania it is widely planted in towns as an avenue tree below 1,500 m altitude.

Uses: Firewood, medicine (bark), bee forage, shade, ornamental, beads (seed).

Description: A medium-sized deciduous tree with an **umbrella crown**, reaching a maximum 15 m. **BARK:** grey, smooth. **LEAVES:** light green and feathery, each **compound leaf to 45 cm long, with leaflets less than 1 cm**. **FLOWERS:** often appear before the leaves and remain some time, **brilliant clusters, scarlet to orange**, sometimes yellow, each flower up to 10 cm with 5 petals, one petal cream, heavily spotted. **FRUIT:** conspicuous **long woody pods**, flat and heavy to 75 cm long, remain many months on the tree. They break open to release oblong seeds about 1 cm long.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 2,000-2,300. Seeds prolifically. Germination rate up to 90%.

treatment: immerse seed in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours. Nicking the hard seed also increases germination rate.

storage: seed can be stored for long periods.

Management: Fast growing.

Remarks: The species has a shallow root system. The dense canopy makes it unsuitable for intercropping.

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