

Madagascar

Common names: **English:** Flamboyant.

Ecology: Now very rare in its native Madagascar. However, this deciduous tree is grown throughout the lowland tropics. It prefers sandy soils. In Uganda it is widely planted as an avenue tree in towns below 1,600 m.

Uses: Firewood, medicine (bark), bee forage, shade (in dairy farms, tea plantations, compounds), ornamental.

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 sometime, **brilliant clusters, scarlet to orange**, sometimes yellow, each flower up to 10 cm with 5 petals, 1 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 (sow seed in pots), direct sowing on site.

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

treatment: immerse seed in boiling 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 if insect attack can be avoided. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management: Fast growing, pollarding.

Remarks: The species has a shallow root system. The dense canopy makes it unsuitable for intercropping except as a shade tree in tea plantations. Also grown to provide shade in dairy farms and planted as an ornamental.

