

Tipuana tipu**Bolivia, Brazil**

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Pride of Bolivia, Tipu tree.

DESCRIPTION: A large, spreading, semi-deciduous shade tree to 20 m, but occasionally to 30 m, with a light spreading crown. **BARK:** Red-brown trunk, fissured and flaking with age, bark on the branches grey and cracked; sap from cut branches red and sticky. **LEAVES:** Compound, **alternate leaflets** light green, each **narrowly oblong to 5 cm, tip round**, often notched, on a short stalk. **FLOWERS:** Very many in long, **loose sprays**, each with **wavy yellow-orange petals**. **FRUIT:** Unusual for legume family, the only genus with **single-seeded, flat winged fruit**, yellow-green at first, looking like blossoms, later grey-brown, fibrous, staying on the tree for a long time.

ECOLOGY: An attractive flowering tree whose natural range is Brazil and the mountain forests of Bolivia. Now widely planted from the Mediterranean to the tropics, USA and Australia. It is drought resistant, tolerating a wide variety of soils, including black cotton. In Kenya, it will grow at altitudes from 1,200 to 2,200 m. Agroclimatic Zones III–IV.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, bee forage, shade, ornamental, nitrogen-fixing, soil improvement.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings, direct sowing at site.

SEED: Seed has good germination rate, often at least 90%; 1,600–2,700 seeds per kg.

treatment: Remove the wing and soak in cold water for 24 hours.

storage: Seed can be stored for up to 3 months at room temperature.

MANAGEMENT: Fast growing; pollarding, lopping, coppicing.

REMARKS: The tree is shallow rooted and so it should not be planted too close to buildings as it is likely to be blown over. In Argentina the timber is highly regarded for furniture and cabinet work. It is finely striped, light coloured and finishes with a high polish. It is not resistant to decay and insects but is well suited for various interior work.

**Fabaceae (Papilionaceae)**

FURTHER READING: <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm>; Beentje, 1994; Dharani, 2002; Katende et al., 1995; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1979; Noad and Birnie, 1989.

