

Tipuana tipu (Machaerium tipu)

Papilionaceae

Bolivia, Brazil

Common names: **English:** Pride of Bolivia, tipu tree.

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. It is drought resistant, tolerating a wide variety of soils including black-cotton. In Uganda, it will grow at altitudes from 1,200 to 2,200 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, bee forage, shade, ornamental, nitrogen fixation.

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.

Propagation Seedlings (sow seed in pots), wildings, direct sowing on site.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 1,600-2,700. Germination rate 90% and over.

treatment: remove wings.

storage: at room temperature the seeds can be stored for up to three months.

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 by wind. It can produce useful poles. The tree is not yet common in Uganda, but has been planted at Makerere University campus where it seeds well.

