



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



### FYN Topic: Dwarf Poinciana Tree

**Question:** I am seeking a sterile Poinciana variety that could be planted near a septic system, or should a Poinciana never be placed near a septic system? My front yard is approximately 70 x 100 ft. T.P in Ft Myers

**Answer:** There is a dwarf Poinciana, *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*, that is evergreen, short and shrubby. It can be trained and pruned into a 'standard' tree twelve feet high. Its roots are much less aggressive than the much larger, Royal Poinciana, *Delonix regia*. Look for scarlet red, rose or yellow blooming types. All types have very showy flowers and fern-like leaves.

Planting this tree or any others above or near a septic field comes with a risk from damaging roots. Standard "set back" requirements (accepted by many municipalities and building inspectors) specify 10' of space minimum between a septic tank and the nearest tree. However, experience teaches a much greater distance is better, 50 feet or more. Dwarf or semi-dwarf plants including citrus trees are preferred but there are no guarantees roots won't find their way into an active drain field.

### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>  
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>  
<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Dwarf Poinciana, *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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