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.

**Answer:** There is a dwarf Poinciana, *Caesalpinina 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 then the much larger, Royal Poinciana, *Deloniz 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://www.floridayards.org)
- [http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu](http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu)
- [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/)
- [http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)

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