



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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FYN Topic: Elephant tree or Ear Tree

Question: What tree produces a seed pod resembling an ear? The pod is dark brown, curved into a circle and is about 3 inches long. Chris, Pine Island

Answer: Aptly named for its mammoth size, the Elephant tree is an exotic, non-native tropical tree that produces a hard, circular seed pod that's curled just like a human ear. Also called the Ear Tree, *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, the tree easily reaches a height of 100 feet and spreads 70 feet wide. The tree's compound leaves look and feel feathery. Over time, the tree produces a wide canopy of good shade.

However, other qualities of this tree are much less desirable. The tree is prone to dropping small and large branches & twigs. Storm winds make the problem even worse. This tree needs regular attention at and above ground level.

To have this large tree pruned properly, hire an ISA certified arborist. Finally, regularly maintain the landscape underneath by cleaning up fallen branches as well as its messy seed pods.



Seed pod of Elephant Tree

Useful Links

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

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 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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