

Ceiba speciosa

Silk-floss Tree, Kapok, Floss-silk tree,
Corisia, Paineira-rosa

Bombacaceae

Flower Display: A+



Fort Myers, Florida. Form suggests a tree grown from a rooted-cutting

Early November



Fort Myers, Florida

Mid October

Imagine a rounded canopy adorned with thousands of large, starry, fleshy, pink flowers on leafless branches. This has to be one of the most spectacular flowering trees on the planet. Most trees begin to lose their leaves in September, in preparation for their stunning flower display. After flowering, the trees remain leafless until March, at which time they again suddenly explode, this time in green leaves. Between flowering and leafing out, some few trees are favored with a formidable display of pure white cottony balls, emanating from pear-shaped capsules. Perhaps the only dull moments in this tree's life are the months when it is starkly naked, with neither green leaves, pink flowers nor white balls.

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Fort Myers, Florida

Mid November

Cceiba speciosa

Incorrect: *Chorisia speciosa*
Origin: Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina
Zone: 10a – 12b, 29°F minimum
Growth Rate: Fast

Flowering Month(s): September - December
Flowering Days: 30

Leaf Persistence: Deciduous from November - March
Messiness: High in October and November

Salt Tolerance: Medium
Drought Tolerance: High
Nutritional Requirements: Medium

Typical Dimension: 45' x 45'

Uses: Park, Shade, Specimen

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This is a fast-growing tree and despite its large size it's worth its residency in large gardens capable of holding it. The trunk and branches are covered with stout spines, but those on the trunk may disappear with age. The trunks of mature trees is often swollen and bottle-shaped. The seeds are imbedded in a white cottony fiber, which when broken apart, are dispersed by the wind. The fiber was once used to stuff pillow and mattresses. Seedlings will grow up to 3 feet in a year and flower in about 8 to 10 years. Trees from cuttings or grafted unions are better suited for most gardens, since they grow lower and flower sooner than their seedling counterparts. Chewing beetles can be a nuisance, but can be treated with a soil-applied, systemic insecticide. In California, the Santa Anna winds can completely defoliate trees but they should begin re-leaving in a couple of weeks after the passing of the winds.

New and old flowers from four trees



Fort Myers, Florida

Early November

Two types of capsules and formation of the silk-floss



Fort Myers, Florida

Late March

Flowers: Five streaked with mostly pink but also yellow or whitish petals with lighter colored throat. Stamens fused or free at ends

Fruits: Capsules, woody, oblong, green, and dehiscent, to about 8 inches long. Seeds embedded in white fiber

Leaves: (Not shown). Palmate, alternate, to 5 inches long, on long petiole, with 5-7 narrowly finely serrated elliptic leaflets