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Delonix regia

Royal Poinciana, Flamboyant, Flame Tree,
Árbol de Fuego, Flamboyán, Malinche

Fabaceae

Flower Display: A+



Fort Myers, Florida

Mid June



Homestead, Florida

Early June

D. regia is perhaps the most observed flowering tree in tropical and subtropical climates. Showy and bountiful flowers are etched in the memories of travelers and residents alike. However, *D. regia* does have some shortcomings. Germination to flowering may take 12 years or more. During a bad

bloom year, the entire population of trees in a given location may fail to produce a worthwhile display of flowers, and in many cases, scant or no shade is provided for a part of winter or spring. The good news is that most trees flower within 5 years of germination, the bad news is that most trees flower only about 1 in 5 years, and *D. regia* is only briefly deciduous under Florida conditions. Buyers are encouraged to buy trees already with flowers to ensure no seasonal lapses of its powerful display. When leafless, *D. regia* could be described as the shy duckling waiting to become the showy swan. Bright red or yellow flowers first appear on leafless or semi-deciduous branches and are spectacular against the blue sky. Soon after breaking the first flower buds, the tree quickly takes on a full complement of leaves, with leaves and flower in splendid array. The flowers emit a characteristic *D. regia* scent. With feathery leaves and its broad umbrella like crown, *D. regia* is an excellent shade tree that provides light to moderate shade. It is almost always wider than it is tall with arching branches, sometimes touching the ground. Use it as a canopy tree for large boulevards, or as a front yard lawn specimen. However, its relatively short, stout, smooth, gray-colored trunk produces

Continue on next page



Fort Myers, Florida

Late May



Fort Myers, Florida

Mid August

Leaves: Even-pinnate, alternate, to 26 inches long, 10-25 pairs of opposite pinnae, 12-40 pairs of small oblong leaflets

Flowers: Caesalpinaceae, up to 5 inches wide, with 5 red or yellow petals, standard of red splashed with burgundy spots, arranged on racemes up to 10 inches long

Fruits: Pods, long, hard, flat, slightly curved, dehiscent, to 26 inches long, 2 1/4 inches wide



Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic

Mid July

Continued from previous page

buttresses with aggressive surface roots. On older trees, these roots can damage masonry and may hinder mowing and understory planting. This is not a storm sturdy tree, so be prepared to pick up fallen branches following strong winds. Nonetheless, it recovers quickly from storm damage and maintains a pleasing shape. Ambrosia beetles and ganoderma root rot can be problems, and may even kill trees.

While a tree for warm climates, *D. regia* is apparently not a tree for California's Mediterranean conditions. Perhaps the many successive cool nights and the great differences in diurnal temperature is the explanation. Plant it at the start of the rainy season if no irrigation is provided, or as early as February, but before October, if irrigated. It needs full sun to flower its best and adequate room to

Continue on next page



St. George's, Grenada
Deciduous trees with hanging pods

Late July



St. George's, Grenada
Caribbean seaside tree flowers with no problem

Late July

Delonix regia

Incorrect: *Poinciana regia*

Origin: Madagascar

Zone: 10a—12b, 32°F

Growth Rate: Fast

Flowering Month(s): Late April —September

Flowering Days: 53

Leaf Persistence: Deciduous or Semi-deciduous

Messiness: Medium when flowering

Salt Tolerance: High

Drought Tolerance: High

Nutritional Requirements: Low

Typical Dimension: 50' x75'

Uses: Garden, Park, Seaside, Shade, Specimen, Streetscape

[Tropical Flowering Trees List](#)

Questions/Comments:

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Flaring roots of *D. regia*

Continue from previous page

take on its characteristic umbrella form and to branch closer to the ground. If you prune, do so in July or August, after most trees have flowered. Severe pruning, such as hat-racking, stops flowering for as many as three years.