

## *Tabebuia bahamensis*

Bahamian Trumpet Tree, Five Fingers

## Bignoniaceae

Flower Display: C



S.H. Brown

Eleuthera Island, Bahamas

Late March

Growing almost everywhere on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas, this is a hard tree to miss, especially when it is in flower. *Tabebuia bahamensis* is similar in its appearance to its close kin *T. heterophylla*. However, *T. bahamensis* distinguishes itself from *T. heterophylla* with smaller leaves, and with leaflets that are slenderer, and green above and strongly whitish below. It is a slim and trim tree, with a small trunk, and delicate upright branches, and thus a striking contrast to its larger, more robust relative. *T. bahamensis* will do quite well on well-drained, alkaline, or acidic soils. It is briefly deciduous in the spring just before peak flowering. It begins flowering as it releaf. If water-stressed, the leafless period is more pronounced. A spotty flowerer, it may bloom intermittently during the year. *T. bahamensis* seeds germinate about three weeks after sowing. Its early growth is fast in moist well-drained soils, roughly 70 inches in two years. A young tree begins flowering about two to three years after germination, but it will be a couple more years before it truly becomes a 'flowering' tree. Like *T. heterophylla* the leaves of this Bahamas namesake can be badly affected by thrips. Thrip damage usually follows the peak blooming period. Thrip control is best achieved by applying a systemic soil insecticide during spring bloom, before feeding damage becomes evident. This rarely sold tree should be more widely used. It would make an ideal tree for patios, streetscapes and parking lots.

### Bahamian Trumpet Tree

**Syn:** *Tecoma bahamensis*, *Tabebuia turquinensis*, *T. affinis*, *T. leonis*

**Origin:** Bahamas, Cuba

**Zone:** 10a-12b, 28°F

**Growth Rate:** Fast

**Flowering Month(s):** March-May

**Flowering Days:** 15

**Leaf Persistence:** Briefly Deciduous just before flowering

**Messiness:** Low

**Salt Tolerance:** High

**Drought Tolerance:** High

**Nutritional Requirements:** Low

**Potential Pests:** Thrips

**Typical Dimensions:** 12' x 8'

**Uses:** Garden, Park, Patio, Seaside, Specimen, Streetscape



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Sanibel, Florida Early July  
Thrip damage to new foliage



Eleuthera Island, Bahamas Late March  
Cylindrical seed capsule with vertical grooves



Nassau, Bahamas



Nassau, Bahamas

Late March

**Leaves:** Palmate, opposite, to 4 ½ inches long, strongly whitish below, scaly, with 3-9 obovate to narrowly elliptic leaflets, obtuse to rounded at apex, rounded or obtuse at base  
**Flowers:** Funnelform, flaring mouth, pink to pinkish white corolla, yellow throat, calyx densely scaly, to 2.5 inches long on terminal panicles or reduced to few terminal flowers  
**Fruits:** Capsules, cylindric, with vertical grooves, 4 inches long and ¼ inches wide

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Tropical Flowering Trees List  
 Questions/Comments:  
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