

Polyalthia longifolia ‘Pendula’

Family: Annonaceae



Estero, Florida



Estero, Florida

Mast Tree; False Ashoka; Asoka

Synonyms (Discarded Names): *Unona longifolia*; *Uvaria longifolia*

Origin: India and Sri Lanka

Habitat: Lowland rainforests; dry or humid

U.S.D.A. Zone: 10a-11 (Minimum 32°F)

Growth Rate: Moderate

Light Requirements: High

Flower Characteristics: Inconspicuous

Flowering Months: Spring, early summer

Leaf Persistence: Evergreen

Salt Tolerance: Moderate

Drought Tolerance: Medium

Soil Requirement: Wide; well-drained

Nutritional Requirements: Medium

Major Potential Pests: None of concern

Typical Dimensions: 30 to 45 feet high by 8 to 10 feet wide.

Propagation: Seeds

Human hazards: None

Common Uses: Avenues; tall screen; wind block; Italian cypress substitute; hedge;

Relatives

Mast Tree belongs to the Annonaceae family that is populated by more familiar trees. Ylang-Ylang (*Cananga odorata*), Soursop (*Annona muricata*), Sugar-apple (*Annona squamosa*) and Pond-apple (*Annona glabra*) are some of its better known relatives.

Florida Distribution

The tree is native to India and Sri Lanka. It was introduced into Hawaii in 1921, and to Fairchild Tropical Garden, Florida, and Honduras in 1976 and 1982, respectively. This is a rarely used tree in south Florida. In the right location, it could be a prime choice of landscape designers and gardeners. However, sparse availability, lack of exposure and cold sensitivity may limit its widespread distribution in the state.

Growth Habit

Mast Tree is an evergreen tree with a narrow, broadly columnar shape. It is much taller than broad. In Honduras it reaches height of 65 feet (20 m) tall. The trunk is straight and rather slender with gray bark. It has a dense crown with drooping branches. The entire length of the tree is covered by dark green leaves. The trees pictured in this fact sheet are of their natural forms without pruning modification.

Leaf, Flower and Fruit

The leaves are simple, alternate, lanceolate, up to 8.7 inches long and 1.75 inches wide with a short petiole. The leaf margin is upturned and undulating. Emerging leaves are coppery, soft and delicate to the touch. They mature dark green and glossy with a lighter midveins and undersides. The Mast Tree flowers once a year during the warm months. The flowers are inconspicuous, with 5 narrowly triangular, star-like, yellow-green petals. They are arranged in pendulous racemes or umbels. The flowers last only for a short period, usually two to three weeks. They are not fragrant. The fruits are initially green and turn purple to black. They are ovoid and are clustered in groups of 10 to 20. They contain a single seed. Mast Tree is commonly propagated by seeds.



Straight, gray trunk
Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Simple, undulating leaves with upwards margins
Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Star-like, yellow green flowers
Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Fruits
Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras

Uses

The most limiting factor for the use of this tree is its intolerance to cold weather. It is recommended only for coastal South Florida as far north as Palm Beach County, on the east coast and Lee County on the west coast. With its slender form, it makes a strong formal statement along wide pathways and as well as frame of tall structures. It can be considered as having similar landscape function as the Italian cypress, *Cupressus sempervirens*, that generally does not fare well in South Florida.



Ill health Italian Cypress Fort Myers, Florida



Mast Trees
Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Zamorano Agricultural School, Honduras



Grenada, eastern Caribbean



Grenada, eastern Caribbean

