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Spathodea campanulata

African Tulip Tree, Flame-of-the-Forest

Bignoniaceae

Flower Display: B+



Valle de Angeles, Honduras

Early October

African Tulip Tree

Incorrect: *Bignonia tulipifera*, *Spathodea nilotica*

Origin: Tropical West and Central Africa

Zone: 10a-12b, 32°F minimum

Growth Rate: Fast

Flowering Month(s): Intermittently from March to December

Flowering Days: Not determined

Leaf Persistence: Under drought conditions briefly deciduous after flowering

Messiness: High when flowering

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Drought Tolerance: High

Nutritional Requirements: Low

Typical Dimension: 40' x 30'

Uses: Garden, Park, Shade

When torn by strong winds, this handsome tree loses much of its form and beauty. Under that condition and when grown close to competing trees or against tall buildings, *Spathodea. campanulata* develops a rather erect appearance. Its most beautiful form is attained when it is given plenty of growing room and is not troubled by punishing winds. Under those conditions, it becomes a wide spreading tree, with an umbrella-like crown, heavily laden with striking flowers. Large in stature, its roots can damage sidewalks and driveways, and disrupt mowing. Despite this, it is a common street tree in heavily concreted Tegulsigalpa, Honduras. Notwithstanding its brittleness, and susceptibility to wind damage, *S. campanulata* is easy to maintain. When stripped down to its trunk by strong winds, even the most badly damaged tree quickly recovers. Regular pruning will reduce the incidence of breakage. Insufficient water causes excessive leaf loss, bare



Tegusigalpa, Honduras
Notice the repaired pavement

Early October



Fort Myers, Florida

Late April

branches and a scraggly appearance and the occasions for great mess. Flowering intensity depends on the individual tree; therefore, some trees can be said to be good flowerers, while other are poor bloomers. In Florida, full bloom can be expected as early as April, with scattered bloom throughout the year. In Central America and the Caribbean, flowering is more pronounced, and the tree is a heavy bloomer in fall and winter and retains some flowers throughout most of the year. At the end of branches, upward facing, orange-red or yellow flowers unfurl from velvety, horn-shaped buds. Flowers are borne in circular whorls with a collection of crowded buds in the center of the circle. They open several at a time, the outer buds first, the petals remaining fused. *S. campanulata* prefers moist locations below 3000 feet. It has naturalized in many parts of the tropics, primarily from seeds but sometimes from suckers.



Fort Myers, Florida

Late May

Leaves: Odd-pinnate, opposite, with 13 - 17 opposite elliptic leaflets
Flowers: Campanulate, claw-shaped, crinkled orange-red to scarlet or yellow petals, with 4 pale yellow stamens and dark brown anthers, located on terminal racemes
Fruits: Capsules, lance or boat-shaped on stout stalks. Splits open on one side revealing papery seeds

Tropical Flowering Trees List
 Questions/Comments:
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