

Albizia julibrissin: Mimosa¹

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Albizia julibrissin

[View Assessment](#)

North, Central, South

Invasive (No Uses)

Invasive and not recommended by IFAS. Will be reassessed every 10 years. Specified and limited uses may be considered by the IFAS Invasive Plants Working Group.

Introduction

This fast-growing, deciduous tree has a low branching, open, spreading habit and delicate, lacy, almost fern-like foliage. Fragrant, silky, pink puffy pompom blooms, two inches in diameter, appear in abundance from late April to early July creating a spectacular sight. But the tree produces numerous seed pods and harbors insect (webworm) and disease (vascular wilt) problems. Although rather short-lived (10 to 20 years), mimosa is popular for use as a terrace or patio tree for its light, dappled shade and tropical effect. Its deciduous nature allows the warming sun to penetrate during the winter.

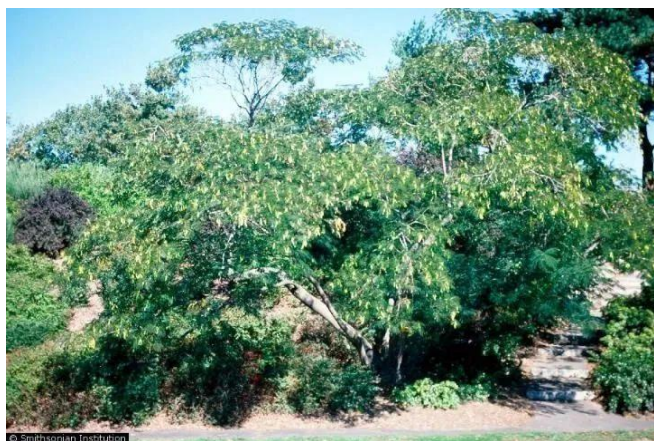


Figure 1. Mature *Albizia julibrissin*: mimosa

Credit: R.A. Howard. ©Smithsonian Institution. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution, Richard A. Howard Photograph Collection. United States, MA, Boston, Arnold Arboretum.

General Information

Scientific name: *Albizia julibrissin*

Pronunciation: al-BIZ-zee-uh joo-lih-BRISS-in

Common name(s): Mimosa, silktree

Family: Leguminosae

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 9B (Figure 2)

Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas (IFAS Invasive Plant Working Group 2008), *Albizia julibrissin* is invasive and not recommended in Florida.

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: deck or patio; reclamation; specimen

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 25 to 35 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: vase, spreading

Crown density: open

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Figure 3)

Leaf type: bipinnately compound, odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire, ciliate

Leaf shape: oblong, lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristics: showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage

Current year twig color: gray

Current year twig thickness: very thick

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: can form large surface roots

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Growing best in full sun locations, mimosa is not particular as to soil type but has low salt-tolerance. Grows

well in acid or alkaline soil. Mimosa tolerates drought conditions well but has a deeper green color and more lush appearance when given adequate moisture. The litter problem of the blooms, leaves, and especially the long seed pods requires consideration when planting this tree. Also the wood is brittle and has a tendency to break during storms though usually the wood is not heavy enough to cause damage. Typically, most of the root system grows from only two or three large-diameter roots originating at the base of the trunk. These can raise walks and patios as they grow in diameter and makes for poor transplanting success as the tree grows larger.

Unfortunately, mimosa (vascular) wilt is becoming a very widespread problem in many areas of the country and has killed many roadside trees. Despite its picturesque growth habit and its beauty when in bloom, some cities have passed ordinances outlawing further planting of this species due to its weed potential and wilt disease problem.

Several cultivars exist: 'Alba' has white flowers; 'Rosea' ('Ernest Wilson') has bright pink flowers, is hardier than the species, and is 10 to 15 feet in height; 'Rubra' has deep pink flowers. 'Charlotte', 'Tyron', and 'Union' are reportedly wilt resistant and may be coming into production in selected nurseries in some areas.

Mimosa readily germinates from its abundant seeds but the wilt resistant trees must be increased by root cuttings.

Pests

Problems include cottony cushion scale, mites, mimosa webworm.

Diseases

Mimosa (Fusarium) wilt is quite a problem and is fatal. It can spread to adjacent mimosa trees by root grafts.

Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker. 2008. IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas: Status Assessment. http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment/pdfs/status_assessment.pdf (November 16, 2012).

¹ This document is ENH227, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Horticultural Sciences. Original publication date: November 1993. Revised April 2007 and February 2013. Visit the Ask IFAS website at <https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication. © 2026 UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](#). To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/.

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