



Tipuana tipu

-- a shade tree

Eric Kaiser

Master Gardener Trainee, 2020

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Tipuana tipu

Introduction

- Tipu is a fast growing shade tree
- Green pinnate compound odd leaves and showy yellow-apricot flowers. Brown seed pods 1.5-3in.
- Native to Bolivia. Introduced to California in 1897. Cultivated in San Diego by Kate Sessions in early 20th century.
- Common names: Tipa, Rosewood, Pride of Bolivia, Yellow Jacaranda.
- Deciduous to partly deciduous; in Southern California loses leaves March-April
- Rough bark, 30-50 feet high and wide
- Rounded to Umbrella shape



Taxonomic Tree

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Plantae

Phylum: Spermatophyta

Subphylum: Angiospermae

Class: Dicotyledonae

Order: Fabales

Family: Fabaceae

Subfamily: Faboideae

Genus: Tipuana

Species: *Tipuana tipu*

Tipuana tipu

Culture

- Tolerates drought as established tree
- Needs sun to thrive, six hours minimum daily
- Tolerates heat, cold tolerant to -4C (-28F)
- Tolerates a wide range of soil types
- Grows best in acidic to mildly alkaline soil.
- Fast growth, 24-36" per year
- Needs pruning for strong branch structure
- Needs shallow planting.



Photo: <https://urbanperennials.com/product/cold-hardy-yellow-jacaranda-tipu-tree-tipuana-tipu/>

Tipuana tipu

Advantages

- Beautiful form
 - Attractive erect to umbrella shape
 - Bright green pinnate leaves, fern-like appearance
 - Abundant brilliant yellow to orange flowers
- Favorable growth in range of conditions
 - Heat tolerant when established, not cold tolerant
 - Drought tolerant
 - Rapid growth to 30-50 feet
- Attracts wildlife
 - Birds, hummingbirds
 - Butterflies
- Useful as a pasture tree
 - Fixes nitrogen, benefits pasture
 - Seeds drop and germinate readily
- Useful lumber: one of the Rosewood species



Photo: <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/L-34.pdf>

Tipuana tipu

Disadvantages

- Significant leaf and flower drop creates litter and slipping hazard
- Drops seed pods that germinate readily
- Listed as a Class 3 Invasive Species in South Africa
- Aggressive, strong root system can damage hardscape
- Rapid growth requires pruning – lateral branches can be weak
- Host to a Psyllid species, *Platycorypha nigrivirga*, discovered in Carlsbad, with honeydew damage and wax-pellet drop which is sticky and acidic

“As a tree service company, we get year-round complaints about these trees. In early spring they look terrible before the flowers and leaves appear. In early summer they make a huge mess when the abundant flowers fall off. In mid-summer, the Psyllids drop copious amounts of sticky honeydew. By fall they have grown 12 foot long whip-like branches that hang in the street and sidewalks. Mid-winter they drop most of their leaves. And finally, by the end of winter, people are complaining about hardscape damage from invasive roots.”

- Quoted from Four Seasons Tree Care newsletter,
<https://fourseasonstc.com/tipuana-tipu/>



Source:
<https://cisr.ucr.edu/invasive-species/tipu-psyllid>

Tipuana tipu

Conclusions

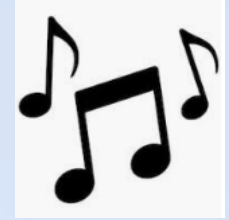
- Tipu is a fast growing shade tree with beautiful form, foliage and flowers
- Tipu has an aggressive root system, invasive pests, continuous litter drop and an invasive habit
- Planted in appropriate conditions, it is an attractive and useful tree, well-adapted to our Mediterranean climate.



Photo: <https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/Pages/tiptip/tiptip3.shtml>

Tipuana Tipu

To the tune of, “Winnie the Pooh”



1. Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
Family is Fabaceae, its rapid growth makes lots of shade,
Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
Deciduous, drought tolerant shade tree.
2. Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
When parking underneath its shade, just wash your car ‘most every day,
Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
Flowers, leaves and honeydew drop.
3. Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
Mind the roots, with sun and space rewards you fast with flowers and shade,
Tipuana tipu, Tipuana tipu,
Deciduous, heat tolerant shade tree.

Tipuana Tipu

Sources

Pests: <https://civr.ucr.edu/invasive-species/tipu-psyllid>

Tree Care: <https://fourseasonstc.com/tipuana-tipu/>

General Information: SelecTree. "*Tipuana tipu* Tree Record." 1995-2020. Mar 12, 2020.
<https://selectree.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/tipuana-tipu>

Pros and Cons: <https://greengarageblog.org/19-tipu-tree-pros-and-cons>

Use in ranching, secondary source: <http://weedsnetwork.org/traction/permalink/wra5658>

Eric Kaiser
MG Trainee, Class of 2020
March 16, 2020

WTBT? *Tipuana tipu*, A Flowering Shade Tree

Tipuana tipu, or Tipu, is a fast-growing shade tree that is well-adapted to the Mediterranean climate in San Diego County. A native of Bolivia and neighboring areas of South America, it was introduced to California in the early 20th century and became a favorite of Kate Sessions, who came to be known as the “Mother of Balboa Park.” Common names for this popular tree include Tipa, Rosewood, Pride of Bolivia and Yellow Jacaranda. The Tipu tree has rough bark and bright green pinnate, compound odd leaves. In the summer, it is covered with showy yellow to apricot flowers. As a member of the family Fabaceae, it is leguminous and has brown seed pods that are 1.5 to 3 inches in length. Typically, it grows to a width and height of 30-50 feet with a rounded or umbrella shape. Tipu may have a lifespan of 50 years although there are some that have lived as long as 150 years. The tree is deciduous to partly deciduous; in southern California, it loses leaves in the March-April timeframe.

Tipuana tipu grows well in San Diego County and is listed in San Diego’s list of street trees. Tipu is a fast grower, often adding 24” – 36” per year. Once established, the tree tolerates drought and heat well, making it useful even in desert climates. Tipu is not especially cold-tolerant, typically to -4C (28F). The tree needs a minimum of six hours of sun daily to thrive. It tolerates a wide range of soil types, and grows best in acidic to slightly alkaline soil. Because of its rapid growth, it requires annual pruning to create a healthy structure and remove weak lateral branches.

As with any landscape plant, *Tipuana tipu* presents advantages and disadvantages to the home gardener. In Tipu’s favor, the tree has beautiful form with its erect to umbrella shape and provides shade to garden areas. The leaves are fern-like and the abundant flowers put on a beautiful display in the early summer months. Tipu is well adapted and thus not a demanding tree, remaining healthy through periods of heat and drought, and its rapid growth is helpful to the impatient gardener. The tree attracts butterflies and birds, including hummingbirds. As a leguminous tree, its root nodules fix nitrogen in the soil and can improve soil health. For the urban lumberjack, its lumber is very hard and dense. Tipu lumber is one of the species with the common name rosewood, and is used in making decorative items and musical instruments.

On the minus side of the ledger, *Tipuana tipu* also presents challenges that must be taken into account when using and placing the tree in the landscape. The tree is host to a Psyllid species, *Platycorypha nigrivirga*, which was discovered here in Carlsbad in 2008. The insect produces honeydew which contributes to sooty mold on the leaves. Its honeydew and wax-pellet drop are sticky and acidic, making it less desirable for use in parking areas. The seed pods are abundant and germinate readily – in fact, *Tipuana tipu* is listed as a Class 3 Invasive Species in South Africa. The tree has a strong and aggressive root system that can lift or damage hardscape, an

important feature to keep in mind in placing the tree away from sidewalks and other garden structures. In addition, rapidly-growing lateral branches can be weak and should be pruned for safety. Finally, the tree produces abundant litter – leaf, flower and honeydew drop – which should be considered when planning for placement and maintenance of the garden.

Overall, the *Tipuana tipu* can be a very good choice as a fast-growing, showy shade or specimen tree in the landscape. The gardener should keep the tree's litter drop, its need for periodic pruning and the aggressive root system in mind when selecting a location for the tree. When properly placed in the landscape, Tipu makes relatively few demands on the backyard gardener and can bring shade and pleasure for many years.

Sources

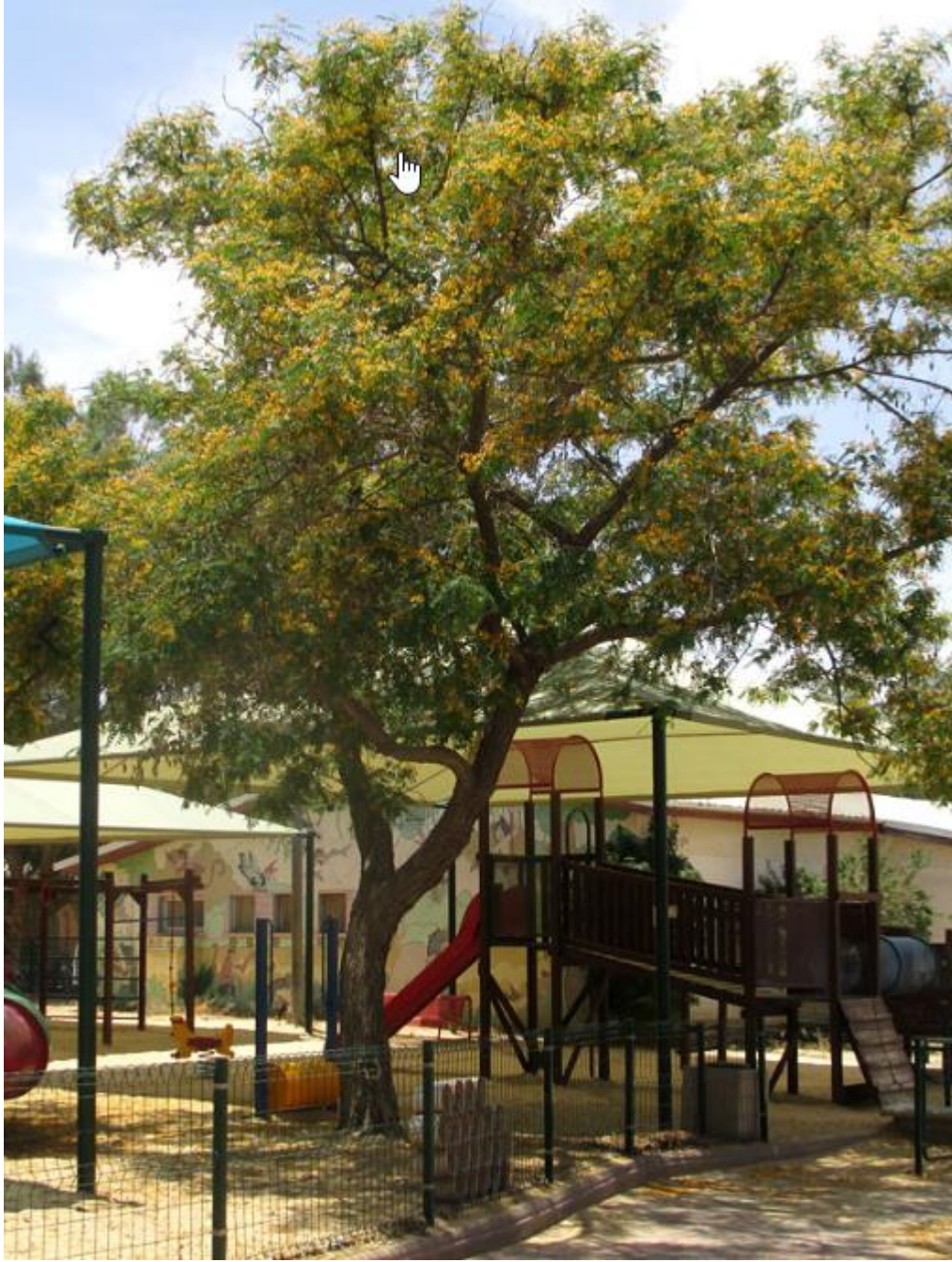
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