

# African Tulip Tree | *Spathodea campanulata*

**Family:** Bignoniaceae | **Genus:** *Spathodea* | **Species:** *campanulata* | **Plant Type:** Tree

## GROWTH HABIT

- Large evergreen that can grow 40-80' tall and 30-60' wide
- Grows smaller in southern California, 25-35' tall and 15-25' wide
- Grows up to 36" per year
- Longevity of 50-150 years

## FLOWERS

- Blooms are several inches across with orange or red flowers that sit like cups on top of the branches
- Buds form claw-like clusters on the tips of the branches, which hold water and nectar
- Bears 6-12" long cigar-shaped fruit pods, that dry, harden, and fall, splitting into two boat-shaped halves full of thin, flat seeds – up to 500 of which can scatter and disperse with the wind
- The tree is an evergreen in the tropics and partly deciduous, the leaves are pinnately compound with oval leaflets and have a glossy medium green color

**COMMON NAMES:** Nandi Flame Tree, Fountain Tree, "Squirt Tree", and African Tulip Tree



## CLIMATE PREFERENCE

- Likes full sun and rich, well-drained soil, should be planted away from cold ocean breezes
- Shallow roots are easily damaged by wind, so limbs require regular trimming
- Native to sub Saharan Africa but can be found throughout San Diego – including at the zoo, Balboa Park, Botanic Garden, and SDSU
- Considered invasive on tropical islands (i.e. Hawaii, Papua New Guinea) since due to rapid growth and widely scattered seeds
- IUCN places the Tulip tree on its list of 100 of the world's worst alien species

## MEDICINAL USES

Extracts of bark leaves and flowers are used to treat: malaria, HIV, diabetes mellitus, edema, dysentery, constipation, gastrointestinal disorders, ulcers, skin diseases, wounds, fever, urethral inflammation and liver issues, as well as a poison antidote.

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### Bibliography

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