Tree Sonchus

Sonchus canariensis



Tree Sonchus flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Giant Sow Thistle, Tree Dandelion

Description:

A tall, upright shrub with unusual, deeply cleft pinnate leaves near the branch tips; thick stems bear large clusters of yellow dandelion-like flowers that rise up from spring to summer; drought tolerant; an attractive garden accent, stunning in bloom

Ornamental Features

Tree Sonchus features showy clusters of fragrant lemon yellow pincushion flowers rising above the foliage from early spring to early summer. It has attractive green deciduous foliage. The large ferny pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color.



Tree Sonchus foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Tree Sonchus is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep. Trim off the flower heads after they fade and die to encourage more blooms late into the season. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Tree Sonchus is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Tree Sonchus will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As this plant tends to go dormant in summer, it is best interplanted with late-season bloomers to hide the dying foliage.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone over the growing season to conserve soil moisture. This species is not originally from North America..

Tree Sonchus makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.



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