Butterfly Orchid Tree

Bauhinia divaricata



Butterfly Orchid Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 18 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Pom Pom Orchid Tree, Mexican Orchid Tree, Cowfoot

Description:

This variety can be pruned and maintained as a large shrub or small tree; interesting, orchid like, pink and white flowers in spring and summer; foliage is deeply lobed, and looks like butterfly wings; great for the back of borders or for screening

Ornamental Features

Butterfly Orchid Tree features showy clusters of white orchid-like flowers with shell pink overtones at the ends of the branches from early winter to mid fall. Its attractive lobed palmate leaves emerge chartreuse in spring, turning dark green in color the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Butterfly Orchid Tree is a multi-stemmed evergreen perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Butterfly Orchid Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Butterfly Orchid Tree will grow to be about 18 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. Although it is technically a woody plant, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as a perennial in our climate if planted outdoors over the winter, usually regrowing from its base (crown) the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant 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 a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America.

Butterfly Orchid Tree is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.