Kapok Tree

Ceiba pentandra

Height: 80 feet

Spread: 50 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Bombax cumanense, Ceiba caribaea

Description:

This is a great exotic looking tree that grows quickly and columnar when young but then slowly branches out like an umbrella; the spiny trunk forms buttresses as it ages; flowers after leaves drop in winter

Ornamental Features

Kapok Tree features showy clusters of lightly-scented pink star-shaped flowers with creamy white overtones and brown eyes at the ends of the branches from mid to late winter. It has attractive dark green deciduous foliage which emerges light green in spring. The pointy compound leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. It features abundant showy brown capsules with creamy white overtones from late spring to mid summer. The spiny gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Kapok Tree is a deciduous tree 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 is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Kapok Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Kapok Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Kapok Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent

Planting & Growing

Kapok Tree will grow to be about 80 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 50 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. 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 in both summer and winter to conserve soil moisture and protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.