Sausage Tree

Kigelia pinnata



Sausage Tree fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 30 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: syn. Kigelia africana, Cucumber Tree

Description:

A fast growing tree that quickly forms a canopy; interesting crimson flowers appear on long tendrils in late winter to summer, followed by elongated fruit that look like hanging sausages; deciduous in extended dry conditions; an exotic landscape accent



Sausage Tree
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Sausage Tree features showy panicles of fragrant crimson cup-shaped flowers with yellow anthers hanging below the branches from late winter to early summer. It has attractive forest green evergreen foliage. The large glossy oval pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain forest green throughout the winter. It features abundant showy tan capsules with brown overtones from early fall to late winter. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up. The smooth gray bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Sausage Tree is a multi-stemmed evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds, bees and butterflies to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Sausage Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Sausage Tree will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 60 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. 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, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.