



POINCIANA

(*Delonix regia*)

The Poinciana originates from Madagascar and is named after M. De Poinci, a governor of French West Indies. It is now distributed throughout the tropics. Poincinas are often cultivated along roadsides and can grow at altitudes from sea level to 700 m.

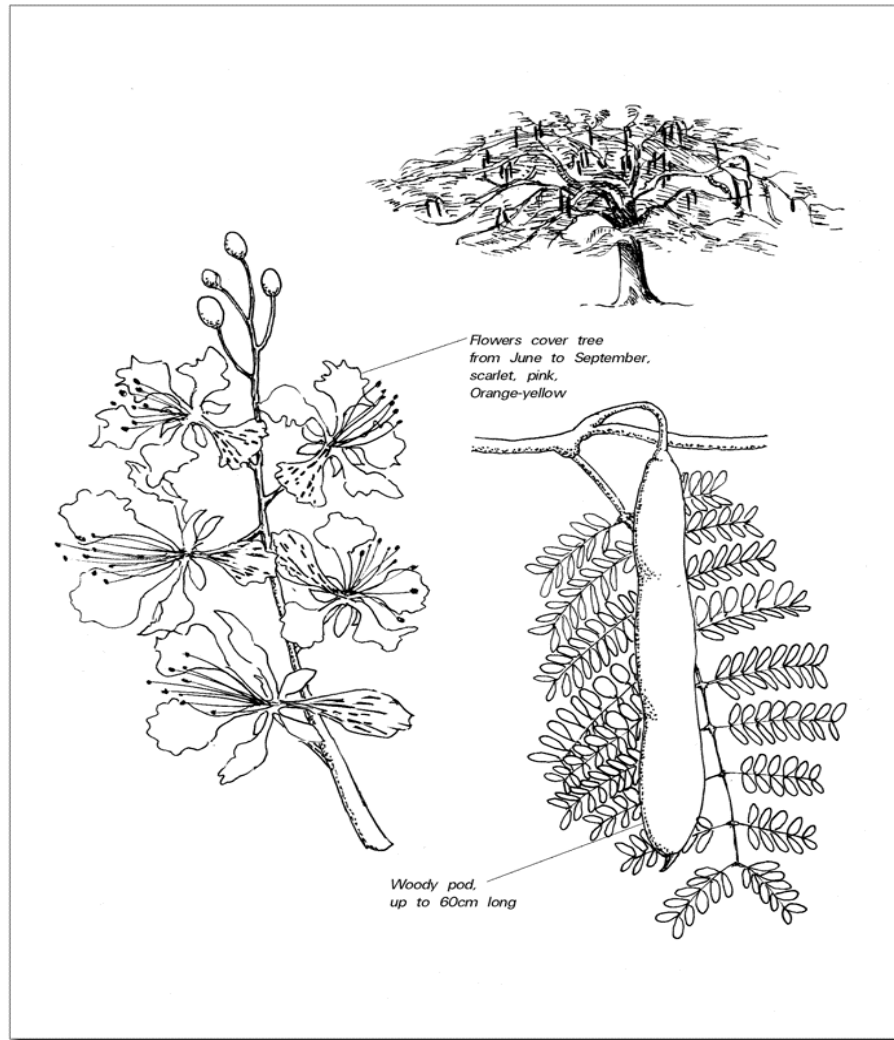
This is a fast-growing tree that grows up to 10 m high but can get to 15 m tall. Its flowers grow in clusters and each has five petals. The colour of flowers may vary from light pink to scarlet and sometimes orange and yellow. Flowers appear between June and September and fruits, July to November. The leaves are compound and can get as long as 45 cm; each leaf has many small leaflets. The seed pods grow to 60 cm long and are dark brown and woody. The leaves are deciduous and during the colder months the tree appears bare.

Some persons have described the Poinciana tree as "the most beautiful tree in the world!" The tree is spectacular when in bloom, especially after the new foliage begins to appear. For about 6-8 weeks flowers together with young feathery leaves present a beautiful floral display.

Hundreds of caterpillars are often seen covering the trunk of the tree during the daytime. At nights they feed on the leaves. These are the caterpillars of the moth, *Melipotis acontiodes*. This moth is small, about 2 cm long, and not very conspicuous. When sitting on the bark of trees with wings folded it is hardly noticeable because its resemblance to the bark.

POINCIANA (*Delonix regia*)

Family: Caesalpinaceae	Species: <i>Delonix regia</i>	Author: (Boj. ex houk.) Raf.
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Height: 15m	Habitat: Sea level-700m	Persistence: Deciduous
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