

Albizia julibrissin

Al-BEE-zee-uh joo-lih-BRIS-in

(Silk Tree, Mimosa)

Fabaceae (family)

Origin: China,

Species characteristics:

Form – Broad crown with spreading and with low, arching branches. Open, lacy, and graceful. The canopy flattens with age. Moderately fast growth to 40 feet tall with equal or greater width.

Trunk/bark – May develop a low crown or a multi-trunked habit. The bark is smooth and gray.

Foliage – Deciduous. Leaves are bipinnately compound, alternately arranged, and between six and to 15-inches long. Each leaf has 20 to 30 evenly paired pinnae, 2- to 4 inches long with leaflets from 0.25- to 0.5-inch long. Leaflets fold longitudinally at night.

Flowers/fruit – Flowering occurs in spring or summer. Flowers are borne in showy terminal clusters (racemes). Individual flowers, which resemble fluffy pincushions, are 1-inch in diameter and pink, rose to watermelon in color. Flowers contain both male and female parts (perfect). Seed pods are flat, pointed at both ends, brown, up to 5-inches long, and 1-inch wide. Seeds mature in summer.

Pests of concern: Mimosa webworm, mealy bugs, and Mimosa wilt caused by *Fusarium pernicius*.

Site suitability: Suitable along streets and in medians, cutouts, and parks. Makes an excellent shade tree. Litter from heavy flowering requires additional maintenance. Suitable under utility lines for years due to slow growth and spreading habit.

Space requirement: Minimum width of parkways, medians, and cutouts is 8-feet. Moderate potential for roots to cause pavement damage. Clearances - suitable for 2' minimum parkways, medians, or cutouts. Suitable under utility lines.

Culture considerations: Frost tolerant. Tolerates most soils including very acidic to very alkaline. Prefers well-drained soils. Best with occasional deep irrigation. Tolerates mild coastal conditions but performs best in warmer inland areas. Exposure: full sun to partial shade. Sunset zone 4-23.

Comments, notes: Litter from seed pods and spent flowers can be an issue. Needs early pruning to develop a strong framework with clearance.

Cultivars: "Rosea" (also sold as Ernest Wilson) has richer pink flowers and is considered hardier (from 0 degrees to 10 degrees Fahrenheit) "Charlotte" and "Tyron" are resistant to wilt. Biogenic emissions are rated moderate.

