

**Scientific name:** *Spathodea campanulata*

**Common name:** African tulip tree

**Organism type:** Tree

**Description:**

Height - the African tulip tree is a large tree that can grow up to 25 m.

Leaves - simple pinnate compound leaves, 30 – 40 cm long, about 7 pairs of leaflets and are slightly hairy and shiny above.

Flowers – large, showy and reddish-orange

**Occurs in:**

Agricultural areas, natural forests and/or disturbed areas

**Habitat description:**

The African tulip tree invades both abandoned agricultural land and closed forest. It also invades natural ecosystems in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Hawai'i, Samoa and Vanuatu. Although the African tulip tree favours moist and wet areas below 1000 m, it grows up to 1,200 m in French Polynesia.

The African tulip tree does not tolerate frost and demands full sun for fast growth and best flowering. The biggest trees grow in moist sheltered ravines. This species loves rich soil, but puts up with just about anything with a little fertility to it, including lime rock. It will also survive in a bit of salinity.

**General impacts:**

The African tulip tree out grows native trees and forest plants. New plants develop from wind dispersed seed, fallen trunks and root suckers. The seedlings establish rapidly and the tree grows quickly, making it one of the first trees to colonize disturbed areas. This tree is one of the most aggressive invaders in the Samoan forest and can now be found even in the mountainous inland areas of Upolu. In Hawai'i, there are major infestations tucked away in almost every rainforest valley along the northern and eastern slopes of Kaua'i, O'ahu, and East Maui.

**Management Information:**

A Risk Assessment of the African tulip tree for Hawai'i and other Pacific islands has been prepared. The result is a score of 14 and a recommendation of: "Likely to cause significant ecological or economic harm in Hawai'i and on other Pacific Islands as determined by a high WRA score, which is based on published sources describing species biology and behaviour in Hawai'i and/or other parts of the world."

**Range:**

Native range: West Africa.

Pacific range: American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Galapagos Islands, Guam, Hawai'i, Nauru, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna Islands, and Australia.

This information was taken from the Global Invasives Species Database and Pacific Islands Ecosystems at Risk website. For more information relating to this species and other invasive plants please visit: <http://www.issg.org/database/welcome/> or <http://www.hear.org/>



**African tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*)**



<http://www.issg.org/cii/PII/>

Photo credit: Natasha Doherty