

## WHY PROPAGATE FLOWERING TREES?

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One of the joys of observing the changes of season throughout most of the United States stems from the opportunity to view the magnificent fall coloring that graces our landscaped neighborhoods and wooded acres.

Curiously, while many northerners long for the chance to loll under the evergreen palms and other flora of the Sunshine State, southern residents complain that we do not have the wonderful change of seasons with its colorful foliage. Many of these people have simply not stopped to take stock of the wonderful color displayed by the many species of tropical trees that abound in Florida.

While not an absolute substitute for the rainbow of color accompanying the frost periods of the north, many flowering trees do bloom in the cool weather months of the Deep South. Many valuable introductions from more exotic areas can be used along with those presently grown to give color during the fall and winter.

Surely, few sugar maples are more spectacular than the glory of mature *Chorisia* in November or the budding explosion of a specimen *Tibouchina* parading its royal purple flowers! As an added bonus, many of our most attractive flowering trees repeat their bloom cycle during the year.

We can realistically forecast the increased use of flowering trees in the warmer regions of Zones 9 and 10 for several reasons. Many promotional groups have recognized the successes of California organizations, which have fostered the systematic use of flowering tree species for many years. Their results are now enjoyed by millions of tourists and residents alike. Public entities, such as parks and public works departments, have recognized the aesthetic benefits that can be achieved as a bonus, in addition to the normal benefits of using trees properly in the public-scape. There is also growing recognition that nothing succeeds more than flowering trees in providing the material benefits of attracting the paying public to such attractions as theme parks, golf courses and other "play for pay" enterprises. And, finally, there is recognition, as belated as it may be, that the aesthetic enhancement of our educational facilities does benefit from the use of color, available in large part from flowering trees.

Along with increased usage of this fine group of plants comes recognition of the need for better methods of use and

propagation. Cultivar selections need to be recognized in order to improve flowering trees in the same way as other lines of ornamentals. Propagation techniques in many instances need to be updated in order to provide an adequate supply of the better plants. Certain cultivars certainly appear to be prime candidates for micropropagation methods, which are being so successfully adopted in other areas. Trained growth methods of propagation and growing on would seem to justify more experimentation and adaptation for certain species that have heretofore been little used because of poor methods of growing. For example *Koelreuteria formosana*, golden rain tree, often develops a crooked trunk. This plant can be trained to grow straight by the simple method of placing trees can-to-can in the nursery. Trees are stronger when trained this way than when they are staked. Finally, the selection of species and the determination of a carefully selected production-size list will go far to encourage the increased usage of flowering trees. Such a list could be a valuable guide in choosing the correct plants for given locations. An assured availability of liners, of an adequate size and quality will go far toward increasing the numbers of the better flowering tree species in common usage.

Only a small percentage of the potentially desirable flowering tree species found on the face of the earth are actually being successfully propagated and merchandized. The following list includes only a small sample that is being successfully utilized and it can be greatly extended through selection of cultivars or increased plant introduction practices.

<i>Acacia</i>	<i>Delonix</i>	<i>Melaleuca</i>
<i>Bauhinia</i>	<i>Erythrina</i>	<i>Peltophorum</i>
<i>Brachycton</i>	<i>Eucalyptus</i>	<i>Stenocarpus</i>
<i>Callistemon</i>	<i>Jacaranda</i>	<i>Tabebuia</i>
<i>Cassia</i>	<i>Koelreuteria</i>	<i>Tibouchina</i>
<i>Chionanthus</i>	<i>Lagerstroemia</i>	<i>Tipuana</i>
<i>Chorisia</i>	<i>Magnolia</i>	

In summary, it would seem appropriate for those who have the proper facilities for introducing, experimentally growing and improving propagation techniques to recognize the need for more flowering trees. The popularity of the limited number of public displays such as Walt Disney World, Cypress Gardens, Orlando Parks System, should be recognized as a signal for progress in the plant world.