

# FLOWERING TREES OF BANGALORE



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## FLOWERING TREES

*Bangalore's charm as a Garden City may have diminished. However, some of the trees that perhaps earned its name are still to be seen and cherished. For those of us who would want to simply immerse ourselves in that moment appreciating the beauty of each of these flowering trees that dot Bangalore it really does not matter ...we will continue to do so. For those who would want to have more information about these trees, I have tried to put together some, along with pictures for 56 species that are often seen. This includes similar / related species that are dealt under a main species. Hope you find it useful.*

**Note :**

- *Flowering seasons mentioned in the following pages are from available literature. Onset of flowering is, however, subject to prevailing environmental conditions and location.*
- *All vernacular names mentioned are Kannada names.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This compilation is a result of several years of observation, reading books on the topic, and interacting with experts and other like-minded people. The effort started with a series of postings on bngbirds as and when I observed a species in bloom. In the process about two dozen species were covered. Due to popular request from several subscribers to bngbirds this series was repeated with some additions. And recently the same content was suitably edited and posted on [www.wildwanderer.com](http://www.wildwanderer.com). Here again, it met with an overwhelming response. This prompted and encouraged me to add some more species taking the total to over 50 species.*

*All this was not done single-handedly. I had support from various people from time to time. Anush Shetty has helped me so much in this endeavour. I do not have enough words to thank him for all that he has done. He has been extremely helpful and solely instrumental in getting the material onto the web. Vishwanath Vittal and Priya Venkatesh took time to read through the text and have made it more readable. Ulhas gave me leads to the locations of some of the trees and also accompanied me on shoots over the years that I indulged in photographing these trees. I would like to thank them for their help. Finally, all the readers who have evinced their thirst to know more about these trees have encouraged me to put together this compilation. I would like to thank all the readers.*

*I hope you enjoy reading this compilation as much as I have enjoyed bringing this to you. I also hope that it helps you learn and appreciate these beautiful trees that share the cityscape with all of us and make the city an interesting and habitable place.*

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## *Albizia lebbbeck*



**Common Name :** Woman's Tongue Tree

**Origin :** Tropical Africa, Asia, and northern Australia

**Flowering Season :** April – May

**Vernacular Name :** Baage

**Brief Description :** This tree is particularly noticeable after the flowering is over and the tree bears the large, light brown flat pods. The pods hanging in good numbers on the tree can be seen during the winter months. These make a loud rustling noise when subject to even a gentle breeze giving the tree its common name. The greenish white flowers of this tree are very pretty, reminiscent of the Rain Tree; they also have a mild fragrance. The tree can be easily propagated by seed.

Species of Grassyellow *Eurema sp.* butterflies use this as their larval host plant.

## *Anthocephalus cadamba*



**Common Name :** Common bur-flower

**Origin :** India, China, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam

**Flowering Season :** October to July

**Vernacular Name :** Kadamba

**Brief Description :** This tree has large leaves arranged loosely and therefore not forming a dense canopy. The tree grows large with spreading branches and is unfit for planting in small spaces. However, it is ideally suited for large parks, gardens and campuses. The flowers somewhat resemble the Badminton Ball tree. This tree has been planted as an avenue tree in some parts of Bangalore.

The Commander *Limenitis procris* butterfly uses this as their larval host plant.



## ***Bauhinia variegata* & *Bauhinia purpurea***



**Common Name** : Variegated Bauhinia & Purple Bauhinia

**Origin** : India

**Flowering Season** : Feb.–April & June–October

**Vernacular Name** : Basavanapaada

**Brief Description** : *Bauhinia variegata* and *Bauhinia purpurea* are very similar looking trees. It is very difficult to tell them apart. The former has very pale pink or white coloured flowers with the some petals variegated while the flowers of the latter are pink to purple. Like in all Bauhinias the leaves are split in the middle which is very characteristic. Both the species considered here are indigenous. *B. purpurea* comes into flower when in leaf while *B. variegata* loses most of its leaves when in flower. The trees bear long flat pods which hang and are conspicuous.

One can see trees in Lalbagh, Cubbon Park, Indiranagar, ring road (near Banaswadi) and other areas.

## *Bombax malabaricum*



**Common Name :** Red Silk Cotton

**Origin :** India and Malaya

**Flowering Season :** January – March

**Vernacular Name :** Booruga

**Brief Description :** The tree is a blaze of colour and completely leafless when in bloom. The numerous, large, cup-shaped, crimson flowers are very attractive. The flowers attract a variety of birds and there is a cacophony of bird calls. Depending on where the tree grows the birds that visit the flowers also vary. Soon after, large green fruits dangle from the tree that turn brown ejecting the soft cotton attached to the seeds.

This is an indigenous, fast growing tree and grows in most areas except in the very arid areas. Virtually every part of the tree is known to have medicinal value. There are trees in Lalbagh (near West Gate and near the Rose Garden), Banashankari II Stage and other areas.

I have personally enjoyed observing birds near these trees in forested areas (particularly Anamalais). Whitebellied Treepie, Hill Myna, Parakeets, Drongos, Orioles, Thrushes, Babblers, Blackbirds and a whole lot more can be seen to the accompaniment of their cacophony. The next time you happen to be in the jungles during the flowering season of this tree, just try your luck.



## *Brassaia actinophylla*



**Common Name :** Umbrella Tree or Octopus Tree

**Origin :** Australia

**Flowering Season :** February–March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** The large palmate leaves are very characteristic and make the tree particularly noticeable. It generally takes a long time before the tree can boast of a substantial canopy. Nevertheless, this evergreen tree looks pretty. Both the common names for the tree are very apt. The name 'Umbrella Tree' is due to the leaf formation while the name 'Octopus Tree' can be attributed to the inflorescence.

## *Butea frondosa*



**Common Name :** Flame of the Forest

**Origin :** India and Burma

**Flowering Season :** January – March

**Vernacular Name :** Muttuga

**Brief Description :** This tree when in bloom is indeed a sight to behold, particularly so when the forest around it is dry and most trees bereft of leaves. The Flame of the Forest too, like many other trees that share the habitat sheds most of its leaves before putting forth the bright, yet pleasing, orange flowers arranged that are placed in clusters on its branches. The flowers are visited by a host of organisms – birds and butterflies. An early morning birding session in the vicinity of this tree during its flowering season is rarely disappointing. It can be propagated from seeds. Some Lycaenids Gram Blue *Euchrysops cnejus*, Pea Blue *Lampides boeticus*, Common Cerulean *Jamides celeno* and Dark Cerulean *Jamides bochus* (Blues – Family Lycaenidae) use this tree as their larval host plant.

In Bangalore there are very few of these trees including a couple in Lalbagh.

## *Callistemon lanceolatus*



**Common Name :** Bottle Brush

**Origin :** Australia

**Flowering Season :** February – May; October

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** The name “Bottle Brush” is very apt for this tree, particularly the flowers. This tree is full activity when in bloom. It attracts nectar feeding insects, particularly bees, in good numbers. The fine leaves and the bright red inflorescence make this tree sought after for landscaping and planting in gardens and parks. As the tree grows very large, it loses its charm. However, when the tree is small it is very attractive. The bright red inflorescence borne amidst fine foliage makes it a good candidate for landscaping. It is also a tree suited for planting in small spaces.

## *Careya arborea*



**Common Name :** Slow Match Tree

**Origin :** Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Burma, Malay Peninsula, Thailand, Laos

**Flowering Season :** March – April

**Vernacular Name :** Kavala

**Brief Description :** A nondescript tree with large leathery leaves. However, during the flowering season the tree sheds its leaves and bears large showy flowers. The flowers have several stamens which sometimes have red at their base. Soon after the flowering is over the tree puts forth new leaves. And, the large fruits of this tree remain until much later and well into the rainy months. The fruit is supposed to be edible. The tree can grow in open areas as it requires a lot of sunlight. The tree itself is propagated by seed.

In the forests where the tree occurs the larvae of a butterfly called the Grey Count *Tanaecia lepidea* feed on this tree.



## *Cassia fistula*



**Common Name :** Indian Laburnum or Golden Shower

**Origin :** India, Burma and Sri Lanka

**Flowering Season :** February – March

**Vernacular Name :** Kakke mara

**Brief Description :** The inflorescence of golden yellow flowers borne on green stalks resembles a chandelier. Butterflies Emigrants *Catopsilia sp.* and the Grassyellows *Eurema sp.* belonging to Family Pieridae choose the tender leaves of this tree to lay eggs on. Also characteristic are the pods of this tree which could be up to two feet in length. Each seed, encapsulated in a sweetish pulp is housed in a separate compartment within the foot-long pod. The pulp is said to have mild laxative properties and is also a favourite of the sloth bears. It is propagated from seed with some difficulty. This moderately sized tree is truly spectacular when in bloom. The tree has somewhat sparse foliage. All of these make it an excellent tree for ornamental purposes.

## *Cassia javanica*



**Common Name :** Java Cassia

**Origin :** Java and Sumatra

**Flowering Season :** April – May

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** A stunningly beautiful tree, the Java Cassia is a medium-sized tree with a spreading crown. It has a straight trunk, horizontal branches and drooping branchlets which bear the foliage. During winter the tree is leafless and is in flush along with the pink flowers during the hot months. The flowers are clustered on the drooping branchlets amidst the pale green leaves. The flowers that are dark pink turn white with age and during the peak season the ground under the tree is covered with the petals. It adds colour to the area where it is planted. Like most other Cassias it bears long, cylindrical, dark brown pods.

These trees can be seen in Lalbagh (near the Glass House – behind the area used for stalls during the flower shows) and Cubbon Park (near KSLTA). There are two trees in the premises of Hudson Church. However, the best example that I have seen is the one behind the King's statue (in the other end of Cubbon Park from the Queen's statue – near Minsk Square).



## *Cassia siamea*



**Common Name :** Siam Cassia

**Origin :** Malaya

**Flowering Season :** Most part of the year

**Vernacular Name :** Seeme Tangdi

**Brief Description :** This species is planted as an ornamental and well suited for gardens and parks as it is not a very large tree. The yellow flowers and pods are borne in clusters. Pods are flat and occur simultaneously with the flowers. Parakeets can be seen feeding on the seeds by evicting them from the flat pods. It does very well even in hot, arid conditions and hence of great use in afforesting hot arid areas. This fast growing, evergreen species can be propagated from seed. The larvae of the Emigrant butterfly *Catopsilia* sp. feed on the leaves of this species.

## *Cassia spectabilis*



**Common Name :** Golden Cassia

**Origin :** Central America and the Northern regions of South America

**Flowering Season :** September – November

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** This is a Cassia with a spreading canopy. It is also short in stature. The large inflorescences are held above the canopy and are produced when the tree has leaves. The combination of green and yellow is quite spectacular when the tree is in bloom. All these features make it well suited for landscaping and also for planting especially in parks and gardens.

## *Castanospermum australe*



**Common Name :** Black Bean or the Moreton Bay Chestnut

**Origin :** Coastal rainforests and beaches in Australia

**Flowering Season :** February–March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description:** This is a handsome tree with glossy dark green leaves and low spreading branches when grown in the open. It bears sprays of red and yellow pea-shaped flowers (about 3 to 4 cm long), which are partly hidden by the dense foliage. The nectar produced by the flowers attracts birds, bats and butterflies in its native land. Large woody pods (measuring 12–20cm by 4–6 cm) are produced following flowering. The pods look like large groundnuts. These pods split in two, revealing 2–4 large bean-like seeds. The tree is known to contain alkaloids that have been shown to have anti-HIV and anti-cancer properties.

It is an ideal shade tree in parks, resorts and gardens. It is known to have a strong root system, which can be used to consolidate stream banks against erosion.

There are several of these trees in Cubbon Park (the road leading into Cubbon Park opposite old Tiffanys), near the High Court (near the statue of Sir Mark Cubbon), Lalbagh, her gardens and a few along roadsides.

## *Cochlospermum gossypium*



**Common Name :** Yellow Silk Cotton

**Origin :** India, Burma and some islands of the Far East

**Flowering Season :** February – March

**Vernacular Name :** Arasinabooruga

**Brief Description :** The Yellow Silk Cotton is a small deciduous tree with a stout trunk. It grows wild in peninsular India, in the dry hilly tracts, which is its habitat. The foliage of the tree is sparse but the large bright yellow flowers borne in terminal clusters are hard to miss; more so since they are in bloom when the tree is devoid of leaves. The fruit is a large capsule that turns reddish when dry; the seeds are embedded in short silky wool.

The Yellow Silk Cotton is propagated from seed.

## *Cordia sebestena*



**Common Name :** Scarlet Sebesten

**Origin :** Caribbean

**Flowering Season :** Throughout the year; peak between January and March

**Vernacular Name :** Kempuchalle

**Brief Description:** An evergreen tree with medium sized rough leaves; it can be planted in full sunlight. This tree has a small stature and has a long flowering season. The foliage is not dense. All these features not only make the tree look attractive throughout the year but also make it well suited for large home gardens and parks. It is much sought after for landscaping, particularly where dense foliage is not preferred.



## *Colvillea racemosa*



**Common Name :** Colville's Glory

**Origin :** Madagascar

**Flowering Season :** August – October

**Vernacular Name :** Hukuchina mara

**Brief Description :** Although it is very similar to Gulmohur in appearance, a mature individual should pose no problems even to a novice when it comes to recognising the tree. The flowering stalks of this tree are held clear of the foliage mainly on the top. Even after the flowering season these stalks persist for a long time. The dark yellowish–orange flowers are arranged in dense clusters on the drooping stalks. Being a medium sized tree, it is well suited for planting on the roadsides, parks and gardens. These trees can be seen at Cubbon Park (Opp. Multistoried buildings). Since the flowering does not last long one should make it a point to see this tree in bloom.

I distinctly remember seeing Colville's Glory even before I got interested in natural history. Only that I did not have a clue as to what tree it was. The tree that I saw was in Mysore (don't quite remember the location) and I can still very vividly recollect standing in front of the tree stunned by its beauty.



## *Couroupita guianensis*



**Common Name :** Cannon Ball Tree

**Origin :** Tropical South America and West Indies

**Flowering Season :** Almost throughout the year

**Vernacular Name :** Nagalinga

**Brief Description :** A truly amazing tree. The tree does not grow branches that reach out from the straight trunk. It bears large, showy flowers, almost through the year, on the trunk and not on branches like most other trees. Though a native of tropical South America, it is considered sacred in India (the structure of the flower is likened to the 'Shiva linga', complete with the snake providing shade). The tree also produces globular, brown, woody fruits of an astonishing size, almost the size of a human head! There is also a strong albeit pleasant smell.

A tree in Cubbon Park (near the counter where tickets are issued for boating) is truly spectacular. There are also trees in Lalbagh, on Infantry Road (near Gem Plaza) and other parts of the city.

## *Delonix regia*



**Common Name :** Gulmohur

**Origin :** Madagascar

**Vernacular Name :** Kattikai mara

**Brief Description :** Gulmohur, though a native of Madagascar, is now common all over India. It is a fast growing species. Truly a spectacular tree when in bloom and otherwise too, owing to its large, flat, spreading canopy. The leaves are feathery and beautiful particularly when young. The tree bursts into bloom with the onset of the hot season. And when it does, it is bereft of leaves and is transformed into a mass of scarlet (although there is some amount of variation in their hues). The flat, foot long pods of this tree are very characteristic and persist. The tree has conspicuous buttresses that at times spread extensively. The Small Green Barbets often find this tree ideal for nesting. These trees add colour to the city when they start blooming.

## *Dolichandrone platycalyx*



**Common Name :** Nile Tulip Tree

**Origin :** East Africa

**Flowering Season :** Most of the year

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description:** Now it is known scientifically as *Markhamia lutea*. This tree grows tall; and does not branch very much. The tubular yellow flowers are borne in clusters and are very attractive. After the flowering season one can see long pods hanging on the trees. As the pods turn brown, they become twisted. These pods, measuring in excess of a foot and half in length, remain on the tree for a long time.

This is a good tree to plant in narrow spaces since it tends to grow tall and does not branch out much. It is suitable for parks, gardens, and avenues.

## *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*



**Common Name :** Elephant Ear Tree

**Origin :** Mexico, Central and South America

**Flowering Season :** February to April

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description:** This tree grows large and bears flowers that are small and somewhat similar to those of the forget-me-not. It flowers in profusion during the season, to the extent that the ground below the tree almost turns white. The pods are large, dark brown in colour and each pod spirals so as to produce a disk like structure. The foliage is fine and feather-like with a spreading crown and is an ideal shade tree. A few of these trees can be seen in Bangalore. There are fine examples in Cubbon Park, and a large tree in Krishna Rao Park next to the Basavangudi Police Station.



## *Erythrina indica*



**Common Name :** Indian Coral Tree

**Origin :** Eastern Africa, Southern Asia, Northern Australia, and islands of the Indian Ocean

**Flowering Season :** February – March

**Vernacular Name :** Halvana

**Brief Description:** This tree, like many others sheds all its leaves when in bloom. The bright red blossoms attract a good lot of birds. The fruits remain on the tree almost through the year. The seed in the pod is a deep reddish-brown. Rub the seed (on the side with the dimple) on a smooth cement floor and put it on your skin; you will realise the amount of heat it can generate! A word of caution, the seed can turn quite hot enough to leave a bad burn on the skin.

Several other species of *Erythrina* can also be seen. *Erythrina suberosa* is seen on the outskirts of the city and in drier areas, while *Erythrina crista-galli* can be seen in gardens and parks (all around Kanteerva Stadium dome) as it is used in landscaping. The tree can be propagated by seeds and by cuttings.



*Erythrina crista-galli*



*Erythrina suberosa*

## *Firmiana colorata*



**Common Name :** Coloured Sterculia

**Origin :** India, Burma and Ceylon

**Flowering Season :** February–March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** A large tree with large leaves. It flowers when the tree is leafless. The small, scarlet flowers are borne in erect clusters and when touched leaves behind an orange powder on the fingers. After the flowering season, one can see the seeds – 2 in no. – one each attached to a boat shaped leaf-like structure close to the stalk.

A large tree at the entrance of Balbhavan is coming into bloom. There is also one opposite the RBI. There are also trees in Krishna Rao Park and the Bangalore University campus.

This is an uncommon tree in Bangalore. This tree also supports a good no. of birds [refer – Karthikeyan, S (1996) : Bird Attracting Trees and Birds of Shevaroy and Kolli Hills . Newsletter for Birdwatchers : 36(3):49–51]. Keeping this in mind, it may be worth the while to propagate this species.



## *Gliricidia sepium*



**Common Name** : Gliricidia, Mother of Cocoa, Quick stick (Jamaica)

**Origin** : Pacific coast of Mexico and Central America

**Flowering Season** : February–April

**Vernacular Name** : Gobbarada mara

**Brief Description** : A small, deciduous, ornamental tree, planted in gardens and fields as a green manure tree. The tree is leafless when in flower and bears fruits during April and May. The small flowers (barely 2cm long) are pale pink and they are borne in dense clusters on bare twigs. Flowers fade to white / faint purple with age. It can be used as an ornamental. The flowers attract a lot of bees and some lycaenid (Blues–Family Lycaenidae) butterflies – particularly the Peabloom *Lampides boeticus*. There are several of these trees in Lalbagh, Cubbon Park, other gardens and a few along roadsides.

## *Grevillea robusta*



**Common Name :** Silver Oak

**Origin :** Australia

**Flowering Season :** February – March

**Vernacular Name :** Called silver by coffee plantation workers

**Brief Description :** This tree will be familiar to anyone who has visited coffee/tea estates where it is grown as shade trees. The tree perhaps gets its common name due to the pale, silvery undersides of its ornamental leaves. The orange flowers of this tree are borne in clusters. The Greyheaded Myna and Rosy Pastors can be seen visiting this tree. The tree itself is large, tall and robust. The rough bark of the Silver Oak is often used by many small creatures like wasps, geckos, etc.

## *Jacaranda mimosaeifolia*



**Common Name :** Jacaranda

**Origin :** Brazil

**Flowering Season :** February–March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** Jacaranda is a very beautiful tree and spectacular when in flower. It attains a large size. The tree has a canopy consisting of fine, feathery leaves due to which it has a great ornamental value. The leaves are lost during winter and bunches of flowers grow when the tree is leafless. The flowers are mauve coloured and tubular. The seeds are enclosed in a round, woody capsule. They hang from the tree for a long time before dropping off. There is flush even when the tree is in bloom. There are many trees that are coming into bloom in the city.



## *Kigelia pinnata*



**Common Name :** Sausage Tree

**Origin :** Mozambique and parts of tropical Africa

**Flowering Season :** March to June

**Vernacular Name :** Sasega mara

**Brief Description :** Bats are known to pollinate the deep liver / maroon coloured flowers of the Sausage Tree. A few of these foul smelling flowers are borne on a thick long stalk which hangs from branches. The fruits, which give the tree its common name, are sausage (cylindrical) shaped, large, woody and hang on long thick stalks. The Sausage tree is evergreen. It also has a shapely crown and ideal for parks and roadside planting. This tree belongs to the same family as that of the Jacaranda and Tabebuias.

## *Lagerstroemia flos-reginae*



**Common Name :** Queen's Flower

**Origin :** India (W Ghats). Distributed in Ceylon, Burma, Malay Peninsula, Australia and China.

**Flowering Season :** March – May

**Vernacular Name :** Hole dasavala

**Brief Description :** This species is also known by the name 'Pride of India'. It certainly merits both the common names attributed to it. The tree, when it puts forth its many inflorescences, each about a foot long, their colour varying from pink to purple, is a grand sight indeed! The tree attains majestic proportions in well-watered areas, particularly on river and streambeds. Away from water the growth is stunted making it quite suitable for planting in gardens, parks and on roadsides. Never is the tree leafless. The leaves are shed, few at a time and turn red or yellow prior to dropping off, on a scale never equaling the grandeur of temperate trees in autumn. The tree can be easily identified even after the flowering season by the smooth bark (it peels like in guava) and the woody fruits which stay on the tree for a long time – some times even up to the next flowering season.

The trees on M.G.Road (near Brigade Rd. junction) have now given way to the Metro silently. But there are trees in the premises of the City Railway Station, in the vicinity of the High Court and Vidhana Soudha, in Lalbagh and near South End (near RNR choultry) and many other areas in the city.

## *Michalea champaca*



**Common Name :** Champak

**Origin :** South Asia and Southeast Asia. In India – sub-Himalayan tracts; lower hills up to 3,000 ft., Assam, Burma, Western Ghats, southern India.

**Flowering Season :** May – December

**Vernacular Name :** Sampige

**Brief Description :** This evergreen tree does not need any introduction. It is largely cultivated for its fragrant flowers. It is very well known to people as they use its flowers for religious ceremonies. Frequently planted in the vicinity of temples, it is considered sacred. The tree requires moderate amount of sunlight and does well in moist climate. This tree has reasonably dense foliage and can grow very large. This has been planted forming a nice arc around the Glass House in Lalbagh on the side leading to the Double Road gate.

The Common Jay *Graphium doson* butterfly uses the leaves of this tree as its larval host plant.



## *Millettia ovalifolia*



**Common Name :** Moulmein Rose Wood

**Origin :** Myanmar (Burma)

**Flowering Season :** January – February

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** The Moulmein Rosewood is almost leafless when it comes into bloom. The bright mauve flowers are borne on drooping stalks and very similar to that of the familiar Pongam. The flowers attract plenty of bees. Midway during the flowering season the leaves appear. The leaflets of this tree are small and a very pleasant shade of green when new. The seed pods are flat and contain two to three seeds. This being a medium sized tree can be planted in a variety of situations. These trees can be seen in FM Cariappa Park, Cubbon Park, vicinity of Vidhana Soudha and Lalbagh besides other areas.

## *Millingtonia hortensis*



**Common Name :** Indian Cork Tree

**Origin :** Burma & Malayan archipelago

**Flowering Season :** September – October

**Vernacular Name :** Akasha Mallige

**Brief Description :** A glorious tree though it lacks the bright flowers of many ornamental trees. A lofty tree, grows very tall and straight, the drooping branches laden with whitish flowers add to the beauty of the tree. The trumpet-shaped flowers are white and borne in clusters. The flowers have a pleasant fragrance that fills the air. They form a carpet on the ground during the flowering season. Though the tree drops most of the leaves for a short period during winter it is never completely bare. The bark of the tree has deep fissures and is used as cork, hence the common name. The flowers are thought to be pollinated by nocturnal insects. Even if one has to go a little out of the way to see this tree in bloom, it is worth the while.

Trees in bloom can be seen in the High Court complex – one tree close to the Lord Cubbon's statue; a series of them planted along the periphery of the Jayanagar Stadium (Madhavan Park) – the road leading from Rani Sarala Devi High School to Jayanagar III Block (Cosmopolitan Club). It should not be difficult for anyone with a good nose to locate these trees when in bloom!

## *Parkia biglandulosa*



**Common Name :** Badminton Ball Tree

**Origin :** Malaya

**Flowering Season :** October – December

**Vernacular Name :** Shivalinga

**Brief Description :** This can grow into a large tree indeed with many spreading branches. The leaves are fine and feathery. The inflorescence is similar to a Badminton Ball hanging at the tip of a long thick stalk – the reason for its common name. The fruits that are flat are in clusters at the tip of long thick stalks. Known to grow quite fast. The entire inflorescence has a very soft appearance. However, once the flower is dry the core is pretty hard. Please do not even for fun try flinging it at any one. It really hurts!!

One can see these trees in J.P.Nagar I Phase (Opp. the gate of SSMRV college) and also in Cubbon Park.

## *Peltophorum pterocarpum*



**Common Name** : Copper Pod

**Origin** : Ceylon, Andamans, Malaya and North Australia

**Flowering Season** : March – September

**Vernacular Name** : Haladi Gulmohur

**Brief Description:** The Copper Pod is considered to be a semi-evergreen tree. It is seldom leafless though it sheds leaves en masse during the winter months for a very brief period. The name `Copper Pod' comes from the coppery-red seed cases that are seen in profusion (they turn black with age).

A species which is easy to propagate, hardy, and can survive in harsh conditions. A pretty sight when in bloom. It bears clusters of yellow flowers at the end of the branches, together with dark green leaves. The ground under the tree is strewn with a carpet of the yellow petals and is sight to behold. The tree is large and very shapely.

These trees are in the park flanking Nanda Road (continuation of RV road) from South End to Jayanagar and several other areas of Bangalore.



## *Plumeria sp.*



**Common Name** : Frangipani, Temple Tree, Pagoda Tree

**Origin** : West Indies, Mexico

**Flowering Season** : February to October

**Vernacular Name** : Kaadusampige

**Brief Description** : There are 2 species of Temple Trees that are met with often. The Red Frangipani *Plumeria rubra* which is a somewhat odd-looking tree while the White Frangipani *Plumeria alba* is the more handsome. Both are of small stature; the former being deciduous and the latter evergreen. They both have leaves that are thick. The leaves and the stem exude a white milky substance when injured. Both, the Red and the White Frangipanis, bear fragrant flowers in clusters at the tips of their branches. These trees are planted in gardens and parks and often used in landscaping. In Bangalore the White Frangipane can be seen near the King's Statue on Cubbon Road and one large tree in the premises of the Manipal Centre. Several individuals of both these can also be seen in the premises of the High Court besides other gardens and parks in the city.

The trees are easily propagated from cuttings. There are several hybrids of these Frangipanis.

## *Polyalthia longifolia*



**Common Name :** Mast Tree

**Origin :** Sri Lanka

**Flowering Season :** March – May

**Vernacular Name :** Ashoka

**Brief Description :** Very often this tree is erroneously called Ashoka (*Saraca asoca*). The name Mast Tree describes this species better. These trees are evergreen and grow tall. In *P. longifolia* the long tapering leaves are borne on short slender horizontal branches while in the case of var. pendula similar leaves are borne on drooping branches. Both are ideally suited for planting in a variety of situations. The flowers are pale green with a hint of yellow and not very prominent (particularly in pendula where the foliage conceals the flowers). Bats disperse the fruits. This tree also is the larval food plant of the Tailed Jay butterfly.

## *Pongamia glabra*



**Common Name :** Pongam/Indian Beech Tree

**Origin :** India, Seychelles, Malaya, Ceylon, tropical Australia & China, some Pacific islands.

**Flowering Season :** January – March

**Vernacular Name :** Honge

**Brief Description :** This native tree has a wide distribution. It is nearly evergreen and hardy. Pongam is medium sized tree. Widely grown due to the many advantages of the species. It can be grown with ease, it is not very slow growing, and has a dense canopy. Apart from the many other uses of the tree, it has been planted in the past for shade along roadsides. The small flowers (similar to the flowers of the pea plant) vary in colour from white to pale purple. It attracts many butterflies like the Cerulean, Blue Tiger and Common Crows. Many of these trees are just coming into bloom in the city.

When these trees sport fresh leaves of a very appealing and enjoyable shade of green it is a pleasure to watch them.

## *Pterospermum acerifolium*



**Common Name :** Dinner Plate Tree

**Origin :** India; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Nepal, Myanmar; Thailand

**Flowering Season :** February – March

**Vernacular Name :** Naradu

**Brief Description :** This tree is also popularly known as Kanaka Champa. The flowers are white with long narrow petals. The sweet-scented flowers open at night and fall by morning; the flowers are pollinated by bats. The name *Pterospermum* means winged seeds. The brown coloured winged seeds fall out of large woody capsules which mature after remaining on the tree for almost a year.

This medium sized evergreen tree is a native of the Himalayan foothills. It is planted in many other parts of the country in parks and gardens as it can be propagated from fresh seeds. Couple of trees can be seen in the premises of the Bal Bhavan.



## *Samanea saman*



**Common Name :** Rain Tree

**Origin :** South America

**Flowering Season :** March–September

**Vernacular Name :** Male mara

**Brief Description :** The origin of the common name of this species is uncertain. This large tree has an impressive umbrella-like canopy and it can be quite fascinating to watch the tree do its daily exercise of opening and closing its leaves. The flowers are white and pink resembling an open brush contrasting against the green crown. An ideal species to be planted along broad roads, it also provides for roosting and nesting of many birds.

## *Santalum album*



**Common Name :** Sandal Wood Tree

**Origin :** India

**Flowering Season :** Throughout the year; mainly February – May

**Vernacular Name :** Gandhada mara

**Brief Description :** The Sandalwood is an evergreen tree. The tree, in its living form, has no fragrance much to the contrary to what people often expect. The tiny flowers are greenish to begin with and turn maroon eventually; they can be easily overlooked. The fruits are green when raw and become blackish when ripe. At this stage the koels throng the tree. These birds are also perhaps among the important seed dispersal agents of the tree. The somewhat closed foliage also affords ample cover to the shy Koel.

## *Saraca asoca*



**Common Name :** Ashoka Tree

**Origin :** India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Malayasia

**Flowering Season :** Throughout the year; mainly November – March

**Vernacular Name :** Ashoka

**Brief Description :** This is a small sized evergreen tree with spreading branches and dense foliage of medium sized leaves. If planted in an open area, it assumes a well proportioned, round canopy. The flowers are borne on dry branches in dense clusters that are orange-red that deepens as they age. The tree looks particularly attractive when in bloom. Nice, stand alone individuals can be seen in Lalbagh. I have seen some fine members of this species in the forests of Goa.

This tree is also associated with mythology. Besides, it is attributed with a lot of medicinal properties. It is propagated by seeds.

## *Solanum grandiflorum*



**Common Name** : Potato Tree

**Origin** : South America

**Flowering Season** : Throughout the year

**Vernacular Name** : None

**Brief Description** : This species grows into a small tree seldom growing over 15 feet and is very ornamental indeed. It has a very proportionate round crown when allowed to grow unhindered. The tree is in flower most of the year. The flowers are dark purple when they are young, turning paler with age. They occur in clusters and flowers of different ages can be seen in each cluster. Hence, at any given point of time the tree has flowers of all shades of purple. The large leaves are deeply indented. The young shoots and the undersides of the leaves are covered with prickles.



## *Spathodea companulata*



**Common Name :** African Tulip Tree

**Origin :** Native of Africa

**Flowering Season :** August to December

**Vernacular Name :** Nirukai mara

**Brief Description :** Almost suddenly this species seems to have come into bloom all over town. It is a grand sight particularly where they have been planted at the boundary of parks. A handsome tree bears dark green leaves most of the year. It is in bloom for a long duration providing many birds with nectar from its cup shaped deep-orange flowers. The flowers in clusters held clear off the foliage are in contrast to the green foliage. It is not unusual to find buds of various ages, flowers, and erect, green seed cases in the same cluster. Children squirt the liquid in the buds at each other. The seed cases when mature, become brown and woody. A large transparent, polythene-like, appendage surrounds the tiny brown seed that float in the air before reaching the ground in large quantities. Can be seen at Cubbon Park, Lalbagh and in other parts of the city.

## *Swietenia macrophylla*



**Common Name :** Large-leaved Mahogany

**Origin :** Caribbean; West Indies

**Flowering Season :** March – April

**Vernacular Name :** Mahogany

**Brief Description :** The flowers of this tree are very tiny and hardly noticeable when on the tree. But one can see these pale greenish flowers scattered on the ground beneath the tree. However, the strong yet pleasant fragrance in the vicinity of the tree in flower gives it away. It is quite an experience to be beneath a mahogany in flower on a summer morning or in the evening. At this time, the tree also sports fresh leaves which are shed very briefly during December through January. The seeds of mahogany are familiar to every one due to its dispersal method. The seeds are brown and have a long flat wing and are neatly arranged and enclosed in a woody capsule. These seeds can be used for propagation.

There are a few avenues in Bangalore lined with this tree. The road running parallel to the park with the statues of the Queen and the King in Cubbon Park (opposite the stadium) and the Diagonal Road leading to Jayanagar 4th Block (the road with the Police Station) are just two roads which are lined by this tree.

## *Syzygium cumini*



**Common Name :** Jamun or Java Plum

**Origin :** India, Burma, Ceylon and the Andaman Islands

**Flowering Season :** February – May

**Vernacular Name :** Nerale mara

**Brief Description :** Many city folk, perhaps, would have eaten the fruits of this tree without knowing what the tree looks like. This is a large evergreen tree. Being a native, it can support a lot of life. When the tree puts forth its small whitish flowers, bees are attracted to it. Besides, being a tree with dense foliage it can also support a good number of birds like the barbets, mynahs, and a whole lot of others even in the urban area. The fruits are green when raw and turn deep blackish purple when ripe; fruits have a layer of pulp over a large single seed and are edible.

## *Tabebuia argentea*



**Common Name :** The Tree of Gold

**Origin :** Tropical Americas

**Flowering Season :** January – March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** This tree when in bloom has spectacular yellow blossoms that stand out. It is worth every effort to tend this small tree from South America and wait for it to bloom, though for a short while. It is not very attractive otherwise. The fissured trunk is seldom straight. It has drooping branches that bear long, greyish green leaves in clusters. The tree bears large clusters of bright yellow tubular flowers rendering the tree very conspicuous. The tree is not entirely leafless when in bloom. One can see these trees in the premises of the Bangalore City Railway Station, Vish. Ind. & Tech. Museum – Kasturba Road, several in Cubbon Park, and in many other places in the city.



Tabebuia avellanedae



**Common Name** : Pink Tabebuia  
**Origin** : Paraguay & Argentina  
**Flowering Season** : January – February  
**Vernacular Name** : None

**Brief Description** : A stunningly beautiful tree when in bloom. The Pink Tabebuia is a small statured tree. During most of the year the trees bear very characteristic broad leaflets (five in number) that are pointed at the tip and curved inwards. Prior to bursting into bloom the tree sheds all its leaves. The flowers are deep pink with a pale yellow center and are borne in clusters. Like most other relatives, it can be used as an ornamental very effectively. This species is better suited for this purpose owing to its small stature and they do not attract the axe. All these make it very suitable for planting on avenues.

These trees can be seen in front of Gandhi Statue on M.G.Road, Lalbagh (near the Glass House) and Cubbon Park [near the entrance to Cubbon Park from the Corporation (Hudson circle) side – road leading from Corporation.

## *Tabebuia rosea*



**Common Name :** Pink Poui

**Origin :** Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador

**Flowering Season :** February–March

**Vernacular Name :** None

**Brief Description :** A marvelous tree indeed ! It grows large and is very leafy. It provides ample shade when in leaf. Leafs resemble the silk cotton leaves and borne on branches that grow at an angle to the main trunk and seem to reach out to the sky (this feature can be used well to differentiate the *T. rosea* from a very similar species *T. pallida* – some botanists can comment on this). Like many flowering trees, it is almost leafless when in bloom. The pale pink flowers grow in clusters similar to the other *Tabebuia*s. It is undoubtedly a splendid tree when in bloom. Ideal for parks and gardens where it can be allowed to grow without being subjected to lopping. Some large trees of this species can be in Cubbon Park, Lalbagh, near National College, Basavangudi, all around Jayanagar 4th Block Shopping Complex and near the GPO.

## *Thespesia populnea*



**Common Name :** Portia tree or Bhendi tree

**Origin :** Coastal forests of India and Burma; tropical Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands

**Flowering Season :** Almost throughout the year peaking during winter

**Vernacular Name :** Huvarasi

**Brief Description :** Often planted as a roadside tree; particularly common in Tamil Nadu. The Portia tree is a tree that grows to about 30–40 feet in height. Leaves are broad and somewhat reminiscent of the leaves of the Peepul and are heart shaped with prominent veins. The tree, being a relative of the Hibiscus, has flowers similar to it too. They are large crumpled looking flowers with an exterior yellow colour and a deep reddish centre. The flowers turn reddish as they age. The fruit is a capsule with a rounded shape, somewhat like a top.

The tree is propagated from cuttings and is known to grow rapidly. It is also easily grown from seed.