



Pacific Pests and Pathogens - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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Weeds - African tulip tree (436)



Photo 1. Compact stand of African tulip trees, *Spathodea campanulata*.



Photo 2. Solitary, mature African tulip tree, *Spathodea campanulata*. Note the slightly buttressed trunk.



Photo 3. Clumps of flowers of African tulip tree, *Spathodea campanulata*, at the end of the branches.



Photo 4. Young African tulip trees, *Spathodea campanulata*, showing compound leaves (right) and flowers.



Photo 5. Characteristic erect seed pods of African tulip tree, *Spathodea campanulata*.

Summary

- Widespread. Asia, Africa, North, South, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe (Spain), Oceania. In Australia and many Pacific island countries.
- An invasive tree especially in high rainfall disturbed areas along roads, waterways, and at forest margins where it competes with native vegetation. It also competes with crop production. Alternative view is that it revegetates disturbed areas, providing habitat for native birds and animals.
- Grows up to 35 m with spreading crown, slightly buttressed trunk, compound leaves with 11-15 leaflets, each up to 15 cm long, in opposing pairs. Flowers in large dense clusters at tips of branches, individually enclosed in boat-shaped sepals. Petals reddish-orange, fused together, somewhat tulip-like. Seedpods flattened, brown, erect, releasing up to 500 light, winged seeds.

- Spreads by masses of wind-dispersed seed and by suckering.
- Biosecurity: regulate entry of trees and their distribution locally.
- Natural enemies: non-specific caterpillars, and the fungus *Ceratocystis* are reported.
- Cultural control: pull or dig out seedlings, but only when young, otherwise suckers grow from the roots.
- Chemical control: in Australia, triclopyr + picloram stump treatments; triclopyr +picloram or triclopyr + glyphosate as injections.

Common Name

African tulip tree

Scientific Name

Spathodea campanulata. It is a member of the Bignoniaceae.

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¹Information from Warea Orapa (2017) Impact and management of invasive alien plants in Pacific island communities. In: Ellison CA, Sankaran KV, Murphy ST (eds) *Invasive Alien Plants*. CAB International. (<https://www.cabi.org/ISC/FullTextPDF/2017/20173322107.pdf>); and African tulip tree *Spathodea campanulata*. Brisbane City Council weed identification tool. (<https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/weeds/african-tulip-tree>); and Weeds of Australia, Biosecurity Queensland Edition, Queensland Government. (https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/spathodea_campanulata.htm); and from *Spathodea campanulata* (African tulip tree) (2019). CABI Invasive Species Compendium. (<https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/51139>). Photos 1,2&4 Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org. Photo 3 Joy Viola, Northeastern University, Bugwood.org. Photo 5 Tony Pemas, USDI National Park Service, Bugwood.org.

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This mini fact sheet is a part of the app *Pacific Pests and Pathogens*

The mobile application is available from the Google Play Store and Apple iTunes.

