

Albizia julibrissin

Persian silk tree, Mimosa tree, Pink silk tree



Albizia julibrissin (Persian silk tree) is a medium-sized deciduous tree in the mimosa family that grows in a range extending from the Eastern Transcaucasus region to Japan. In its natural habitat it is a pioneer species in open ravines, sandy valleys and on dry riverbanks. In the Hyrcanian forests of Iran it is found growing alongside for example *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*, *Gleditsia caspica* and *Alnus glutinosa*. Named in 1772 by Italian botanist Antonio Durazzini after the Italian nobleman Filippo degli Albizzi, who introduced the tree to Italy in 1749. The Persian silk tree attains a height of between eight and fifteen metres and forms a characteristic, broad fan-shaped crown seven to ten metres in diameter and almost horizontal branches.

Throughout July and August, *Albizia julibrissin* is covered with a profusion of fragrant pink to whitish pink flowers. They are held above the foliage in large striking clusters. The long silky stamens give the flowers the appearance of fluffy little balls. In order to flower properly it requires a sunny position and in cooler summers the flowers can be disappointing. The flowers are followed by broad flat pods. The bark of the tree is smooth and grey in colour. Juvenile branches are green and change to grey-brown. The transparent crown of *Albizia julibrissin* is formed by the 40 cm-long and doubly pinnate dark green leaves, similar to the foliage of Mimosa. The tree closes its leaves at night by folding them in tightly.

Albizia is planted to create a Mediterranean feel and thanks to the nice shade it provides on account of the broad and transparent crown. Given the broad crown shape space is a requirement. The tree tolerates a wide range of soil types and enjoys a sheltered position in full sun. Once established, it makes a drought-tolerant and heat-loving tree. Being a leguminous plant, the tree has the ability to fix nitrogen in the soil. The flowers produced by the tree are a valuable source of nectar for bees and other pollinators at a time when there are few flowers out.

SEASONAL COLOURS



TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, half-stem trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: park, central reservation, in containers, large garden, cemetery, coastal area | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** Prairie planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide vase-shaped | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 8 - 15 m | **Width:** 7 - 10 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 7B - 10B

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind, slightly tolerant to coastal wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** very dry, dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, butterflies | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, heads, striking, scented | **Flower colour:** pale pink | **Flowering period:** July - August | **Leaf colour:** dark green, buds bright green | **Leaves:** deciduous, lanceolate, dissected, lacinate, pinnate, bipinnate, Nitrogen fixing | **Autumn colour:** green | **Fruits:** striking, large, pod | **Fruit colour:** pale brown | **Bark colour:** grey | **Bark:** smooth | **Twig colour:** olive green, pale grey | **Twigs:** with lenticels, horizontal branches, long shoots | **Root system:** shallow, moderately branched, coarse roots, roots push up surface