



Volunteer Times

Published for the volunteers of the UCI Arboretum

April 2012

Small Flowering Trees

By Laura Lyons, UCI Arboretum



Blossoms of the Pink Trumpet Tree

A few weeks ago, a dear friend posed an interesting question to me, “Can you suggest some small flowering trees for southern California, and ones that will bloom different seasons?” After some time to ponder the question, I realized that there actually are quite a few trees that fill the bill, and a bit of research yielded several more candidates.

It is always important to consider the final size of a tree and the size of the yard it will be planted in. Orange County yards tend to be on the smallish side, so flowering trees like Magnolias (with one exception), coral trees, and other large (60 ft. +) trees are best left to parks and other large areas. Yes, trees can be kept pruned smaller but constant pruning can stress the tree and needs to be done very carefully by trained people. My old employer, the now defunct Laguna Hills Nursery, was a big advocate of “pick the tree for the space,” and it always seemed a sensible choice.

All the trees listed grow less than 40 ft tall, and several stay in the 20-25 ft range. Most are very hardy; any exceptions are noted in the text. I have grouped them by principal blooming season.

Keep in mind that most flowering trees can pose a litter problem after flowering; they are generally not a good choice for poolside. Trees that are particularly

annoying in that regard are noted in the text.

Winter

Pyrus kawakami, evergreen pear – one of southern California’s more famous flowering trees. Gorgeous white blooms in winter. Grows less than 25 ft tall. Unfortunately, evergreen pear is prone to a bacterial disease known as fireblight that is exceptionally difficult to treat and can kill the tree.

Pyrus calleryana, ‘Redspire’ – a deciduous relative of the evergreen pear that flowers about the same time. Has beautiful fall color as a bonus, AND it is much less prone to fireblight. I consider it the better choice of the two trees for that reason

Cercis occidentalis, western redbud – native flowering tree, only grows 10-18 ft tall. Deciduous; magenta pink flowers in late winter. A very nice small tree!

Bauhinia variegata, purple orchid tree – beautiful, pink to purple orchid shaped blooms. Blooming season is unpredictable, usually fall through winter and even into early spring. 20-35 ft tall at maturity.

Bauhinia blakeana, Hong Kong orchid tree – one of my favorite flowering trees. Flowers are similar to *Bauhinia variegata* in shape, but blooms are shades of lavender and purple. Winter blooming. To 20 ft high; another excellent choice.

Spring

Tabebuia impetiginosa, pink trumpet tree, and *T. chrysotricha*, golden trumpet tree. The former is one of my other favorites among the flowering trees. Generally stays less than 40 ft, though occasionally larger. Beautiful pink flowers in early spring. (See photograph.)

Golden trumpet tree is a smaller tree and sparser in its bloom, but still beautiful.

Both bloom in early spring.

Prunus blireiana, purple flowering plum – another favorite of mine. Actually a hybrid. Deciduous tree. Wonderful pink flowers in early spring, then purple

See Trees, Page 2

Spring Brings “Showers of Flowers” to the Arboretum

By *Laura Lyons, UCI Arboretum*

Spring is officially here, and it seems like everything is in bloom, from our spectacular pincushion flower to my favorite tall bearded Iris. California poppies, coast sunflowers, and California lilacs are in glorious bloom. Thanks to herculean efforts by our students and help from UCI’s Grounds Department, the weeds are under control, and the gardens are looking truly spectacular.

Our nursery is likewise bursting with blooms, just in time for our next big plant sale, *April Showers of Flowers*, on April 14 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. We expect many visitors to come enjoy our gardens in wonderful spring bloom and look to add some of our unique plants to their home gardens.

We have some wonderful selections for this year’s *April Showers of Flowers*, and people will be eager to buy; so we need a full crew of volunteers to work sales, cashiering, the holding area, and act as greeters at the front gate. There’s no admission for *April Showers*, but I like to have a volunteer to hand out brochures and greet our guests.

Besides the general public time on Saturday, we

have a special presale for UCI employees only Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. We’ll need to be right on the ball during the Friday Club hours to get everything ready for the 11:30 opening, so extra help both Wednesday, April 11th, from 9 a.m. to noon, and Friday, April 13th, from 9 a.m. to 11:30, during the regular Nursery Group and Friday Club hours would be very helpful!

If you are available to volunteer to help set up, at the Friday UCI Presale, or on Saturday, April 14th, please let me know ASAP either by phone at (949) 824-5833 or email ldlyons@uci.edu

Schedule

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Wednesday, April 11 | 9 a.m. to noon | Setup |
| | (During regular nursery hours) | |
| Friday, April 13 | 9:00 a.m. to noon | Final Setup |
| | (With the Friday Club) | |

Plant Sale Shifts

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Friday, April 13 | 11 a.m. to 1:30 | UCI Presale |
| Saturday, April 14 | 7 a.m. to 9:30 | Setup |
| | 8:30 to 12:30 | 1 st run |
| | 12:15 to 4:30 | 2 nd run |
| | 4 p.m. to ? | Cleanup |

Small Flowering Trees

Trees, From Page 1

foliage that makes this tree unique. Grows to about 25 ft. tall.

Leptospermum lavigatum, New Zealand tea tree – this unique tree flowers spring and summer, and is available in a variety of shades of primarily white, pink, and red. Its thick, gnarled trunk and branches, and unusual grey-green foliage make it a winner. Grows 30 ft tall and wide.

Jacaranda acutifolia, jacaranda tree – a southern California classic. Every June its showy lavender blossoms are everywhere around the Southland. Grows 25-40 ft tall with a classic umbrella like canopy, fine, almost fernlike foliage. Deciduous. A bit messy when the flowers drop.

Summer

Cassia leptophylla, gold medallion tree – briefly deciduous tree with dark green foliage that is a vivid contrast to the clusters of yellow gold flowers. Fast growing to 20-25 ft.

Lagerstromia indica, crepe myrtle – this popular deciduous tree flowers in late summer. There are



Blossoms of the Purple Orchid Tree

many named varieties that bloom in various shades of white, pink, red and purple. Dwarf varieties are as small as six feet; standard varieties can be up to 30 ft. The clusters of crinkled, colorful flowers are a treat. Slightly prone to powdery mildew on coast. Dwarf varieties best pruned as shrubs.

See *Flowering Trees Page 3*
Photos by *Laura Lyons*

Flowering Trees

Flowering Trees, from Page 2

Magnolia grandiflora, ‘Little Gem’ – dwarf version of one of the classic flowering magnolias, grows 15-20 ft tall. Large, showy, saucer like flowers in summer. Sometimes hard to establish in southern California, and requires ample water year round. Prone to shed leaves—don’t plant this one near a path or driveway, or you’ll be sweeping constantly.

Albizia julibrissin, mimosa tree – deciduous. Grows 40 ft tall with wider spread, but can be kept pruned smaller. Likes heat; great choice for the inland empire. Might sulk in cool, coastal areas.

Kroleuteria paniculata – golden rain tree – Evergreen tree. Grows slowly to 20-35 ft. tall. Yellow flowers in summer, followed by reddish brown, papery seedpods that can be mistaken for flowers!

Requires careful pruning when young to establish a good shape.

Fall

Only one tree reliably flowers in the fall, *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, the firewheel tree. This member of the *Protea* family grows 20-30 ft tall and broad, has thick, dark green, glossy leaves, and curious yellow-red flowers that resemble the spokes of a wheel.

Variable

Melaleuca nesophila, pink melaleuca – evergreen plant, large shrub or small tree, depending on how it is pruned. 15-30 ft tall and broad. Pink flowers can appear almost any time of the year, but most common in summer.

IMPORTANT DATES

DATE

EVENT

TIME

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| April 11 | Seup for April Showers | 9 a.m. to noon |
| April 13 | Final Setup for April Showers | 9 a.m. to noon |
| April 13 | UCI Presale | 11: 30 a.m. to 1 p.m. |
| April 14 | April Showers of Flowers | 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. |

LOOKING AHEAD

May 5 & 6

Spring Perennial Sale

SEASON EVENT CALENDAR

June 16

June Bloom

We need used 1 gallon pots

Drop off my our garate any time the garden is open, or outside the front gate when we are closed

CURRENT VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

| GROUP | DAY AND TIME |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Nursery | Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon |
| Orchid Care | Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon |
| Bulb & Perennial | Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon. |
| Herbarium | Thursday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. |
| Friday Club | Friday 9 a.m. – noon |
| Special Events | See Important Dates |

For information on any of these or for general information on volunteering, call Laura Lyons at: 949/824-5833 or e-mail: ldlyons@uci.edu