

CAMPUS ARBORETUM



Focus on:
Styphnolobium japonicum
"pagoda tree"
Fabaceae



Commonly called the Japanese pagoda tree because it was often used as a decorative tree around Japanese Buddhist temples, this species is actually native to China and Korea. The common name I learned for this tree while studying at Purdue was "Chinese scholars tree"...perhaps a more accurate nick name for the tree. The species was originally included in the genus *Sophora*, but has now been reclassified as *Styphnolobium* because it lacks the ability to form symbiotic relationships with nitrogen fixing bacteria in its roots (a common trait among many Fabaceae genera).

To learn more, visit this Campus Arboretum Species Description page found at: <https://apps.cals.arizona.edu/arboretum/taxon.aspx?id=676>

The usually quick-growing tree prefers cooler, more mountainous regions

where it receives more consistent moisture and may struggle in hotter, more arid regions such as Tucson. The tree is well adapted to USDA hardiness zone 4a through 8b, becoming hardy with maturity. Here, it can handle full sun, but may need additional water in intense heat. To save water, plant it in a protected location and in a low spot in the watershed.



Fruits are loment and resemble beads on a string



Lush tropical foliage is odd-pinnately compound.

Ethnobotanical Uses:

This tree is commonly used as a landscape ornamental in many American cities and throughout Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan and Vietnam because of its ability to tolerate air pollutants and heat. In Japan, its flowers and seedpods have traditionally been used for making yellow dye. The species is one of the 50 fundamental herbs in Chinese medicine. Both the leaves and flowers are used medicinally to treat infertility, bacterial infections, and hypotension.

Thanks for joining me on my journey to see and understand trees! The health of the planet and our fellow humans depends on respectful and understanding tree selection choices. I hope you're inspired to deepen the connection by visiting campus. and using the [interactive arboretum map](#) to find the tree featured in this spotlight for a more immersive education and sensory experience.

Enjoy!

Tanya

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