



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Meet the Goldenrain Tree (November 27th, 2021)

by Cathy Ronk, UCCE Master Gardener

Name:

The unique Goldenrain tree with its massive display of summer yellow flowers followed by papery, lantern-like seed capsules is a small tree that is suitable for urban and residential landscapes. *Koelreuteria paniculata* is native to eastern Asia. Common names include: Pride of India, China tree, Varnish tree.

Interesting Facts:

- The Goldenrain tree was introduced in Europe in 1747 and to America in 1763.
- Genus name, *Koelreuteria* (pronounced "COLE-rew-TEAR-e-uh"), honors Joseph Gottlieb Koelreuter (1733-1806), professor of natural history and a pioneer experimental investigator of plant hybridization.
- Asians highly regard this tree for its natural pharmaceutical uses and for planting on the graves of important officials.
- A Goldenrain tree in Santa Ana is registered as a California Big Tree. It measures 44 feet high, with a tree circumference of 82 inches and a crown spread of 56 feet.
- In parts of the **eastern** United States, particularly Florida and some neighboring states, it is considered an invasive species. However, *Koelreuteria* is NOT on the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) list.



Description:

Our Master Gardener tree list-- entitled "Ornamental Trees for Home Gardens and Landscapes," describes the Goldenrain tree as upright, and rounded with open branching that gives light shade. It is deciduous, meaning it drops all of its leaves in one season. Dark green compound leaves to 15 inches long may (or may not) turn yellow-gold in fall.

With a moderate growth rate, *Koelreuteria* matures to 20-35 feet high and 25-40 feet wide. In summer, it produces "millions of tiny yellow flowers on wispy clusters (8-14 inches long) on branch tips to make the tree look like a powdery, airy golden 'rain' or mass of lace." The yellow coloring is somewhat rare among flowering trees.

Following the flowers, interesting papery seed capsules form--red when young then maturing to buff and brown shades. These three-sided inflated capsules somewhat resemble Japanese lanterns, contain a few small, hard black seeds and can hang on the tree through winter.

'**Coral Sun**' is a nonflowering cultivar with coral new growth that matures to green and has contrasting with coral stems. '**Fastigiata**' is columnar at 25 feet tall, 3 feet wide. '**Summerburst**' has glossier and darker green foliage. '**Rose Lantern**' has pinkish seed pods. '**September**' blooms one month later the other cultivars.

Care:

Plant trees in full sun fall through spring. This tree adapts well to most soil types but appreciates soil that drains well. Water deeply after planting and mulch, keeping mulch away from the tree trunk. No fertilizer is needed.

The Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS IV) rates the Goldenrain tree as a "moderate water use" tree. It does have some drought tolerance. The WUCOLS project was initiated and funded by the Water Use Efficiency Office of the California

Cooperative Extension. WUCOLS IV provides evaluations of the irrigation needs of over 3,500 plant groups used in California landscapes at www.ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS.

Prune tree while dormant in winter to prevent gawkiness and to ensure it develops good branch structure.

This tree resists most pests and diseases, but it can experience flatheaded borers. These borers usually do not attack healthy trees.

Design Tips:

The Goldenrain tree adds charm to the garden throughout the year—attractive spring foliage, unusual, showy yellow tree blossoms in summer, graceful papery lanterns dangling from branches in fall and winter that rattle gently with the breeze. It is hardy, tolerating urban stresses. Its well-behaved root systems makes it a good street tree and lawn tree. Litter includes falling blossoms, dried seed capsules with small, hard seeds, and fall leaves.

Shade produced is rated as moderately low when in leaf, so it's a good tree to plant under. But do watch for and control self-sown seedlings.

Artists interested in natural elements note that the flowers produce a yellow dye and the leaves produce a black dye. The small, hard, round seeds are used as beads in jewelry. The papery seed capsules add interest in fresh and dried arrangements.

The Tulare-Kings County Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions:

Ace Hardware, Visalia-1st Sat./every month, 10 am-1 pm

Luis Nursery, Visalia-2nd Sat./every month, 10 am-2 pm

Visalia Farmer's Market- 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8-11 am, 2100 W. Caldwell Ave (behind Sears Building)

Questions?

Call us: Master Gardeners in Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30

Visit our website to search past articles, find links to UC gardening information, or to email us with your questions:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/