Introduction

This fast-growing, deciduous tree has a low branching, open, spreading habit and delicate, lacy, almost fern-like foliage. Fragrant, silky, pink puffy pompom blooms, two inches in diameter, appear in abundance from late April to early July creating a spectacular sight. But the tree produces numerous seed pods and harbors insect (webworm) and disease (vascular wilt) problems. Although rather short-lived (10 to 20 years), mimosa is popular for use as a terrace or patio tree for its light, dappled shade and tropical effect. Its deciduous nature allows the warming sun to penetrate during the winter.

General Information

Scientific name: Albizia julibrissin
Pronunciation: al-BIZ-zee-uh joo-lih-BRISS-in
Common name(s): Mimosa, silktree
Family: Leguminosae
USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 9B (Figure 2)
Invasive potential: According to the IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida’s Natural Areas (IFAS Invasive Plant Working Group 2008), Albizia julibrissin is invasive and not recommended in Florida.
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: deck or patio; reclamation; specimen
Availability: not native to North America
**Description**

- **Height:** 15 to 25 feet
- **Spread:** 25 to 35 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular
- **Crown shape:** vase, spreading
- **Crown density:** open
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** fine

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Figure 3)
- **Leaf type:** bipinnately compound, odd-pinnately compound
- **Leaf margin:** entire, ciliate
- **Leaf shape:** oblong, lanceolate
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** no color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristics:** showy

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** elongated
- **Fruit length:** 3 to 6 inches
- **Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** brown
- **Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure
- **Breakage:** susceptible to breakage
- **Current year twig color:** gray
- **Current year twig thickness:** very thick
- **Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**

- **Roots:** can form large surface roots
- **Winter interest:** no
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant
- **Pest resistance:** sensitive to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Growing best in full sun locations, mimosa is not particular as to soil type but has low salt-tolerance. Grows well in acid or alkaline soil. Mimosa tolerates drought conditions well but has a deeper green color and more lush appearance when given adequate moisture. The litter problem of the blooms, leaves, and especially the long seed pods requires consideration when planting this tree. Also the wood is brittle and has a tendency to break during storms though usually the wood is not heavy enough to cause damage. Typically, most of the root system grows from only two or three large-diameter roots originating at the base of the trunk. These can raise walks and patios as they grow in diameter and makes for poor transplanting success as the tree grows larger.

Unfortunately, mimosa (vascular) wilt is becoming a very widespread problem in many areas of the country and has killed many roadside trees. Despite its picturesque growth habit and its beauty when in bloom, some cities have passed ordinances outlawing further planting of this species due to its weed potential and wilt disease problem.

Several cultivars exist: ‘Alba’ has white flowers; ‘Rosea’ (‘Ernest Wilson’) has bright pink flowers, is hardier than the species, and is 10 to 15 feet in height; ‘Rubra’ has deep pink
flowers. ‘Charlotte’, ‘Tyron’, and ‘Union’ are reportedly wilt resistant and may be coming into production in selected nurseries in some areas.

Mimosa readily germinates from its abundant seeds but the wilt resistant trees must be increased by root cuttings.

**Pests**
Problems include cottony cushion scale, mites, mimosa webworm.

**Diseases**
Mimosa (Fusarium) wilt is quite a problem and is fatal. It can spread to adjacent mimosa trees by root grafts.

**Literature Cited**