Introduction
Brilliant scarlet and yellow flowers, feathery foliage, and quick growth make dwarf poinciana a popular evergreen shrub. It is hard to find a more attractive flower. Also known as Barbados flower fence, this open-branched, fine-textured shrub will tolerate hot, dry areas, and forms an effective thorny barrier. It flowers year-round with peak displays in spring and fall.

General Information
Scientific name: *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*
Pronunciation: sez-al-PIN-ee-uh pul-KAIR-ih-muh
Common name(s): Dwarf poinciana, Barbados flower fence

Family: *Leguminosae*
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: reclamation; specimen
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

Description
Height: 8 to 12 feet
Spread: 10 to 12 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular
Crown shape: round
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

Figure 2. Range

Figure 1. Middle-aged *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*: Dwarf Poinciana
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Caesalpinia pulcherrima: Dwarf Poinciana

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement**: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type**: bipinnately compound, even-pinnately compound
- **Leaf margin**: entire
- **Leaf shape**: oblong, elliptic (oval)
- **Leaf venation**: reticulate, pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence**: evergreen
- **Leaf blade length**: less than 2-inches
- **Leaf color**: green
- **Fall color**: no color change
- **Fall characteristic**: not showy

![Figure 3. Foliage](image)

**Flower**

- **Flower color**: red, yellow, orange
- **Flower characteristics**: very showy

![Figure 4. Flower](image)

**Fruit**

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

![Figure 5. Fruit](image)

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches**: branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; no thorns
- **Pruning requirement**: needed for strong structure
- **Breakage**: susceptible to breakage
- **Current year twig color**: green, brown
- **Current year twig thickness**: thick
- **Wood specific gravity**: unknown

**Culture**

- **Light requirement**: full sun, partial sun or partial shade
- **Soil tolerances**: clay; sand; loam; acidic; alkaline; well drained
- **Drought tolerance**: high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance**: moderate

**Other**

- **Roots**: not a problem
- **Winter interest**: yes
- **Outstanding tree**: no
- **Invasive potential**: little invasive potential
- **Ozone sensitivity**: unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility**: unknown
- **Pest resistance**: resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Full sun is preferred for best flowering, but some shade is tolerated. Any soil is suitable as long as it is well drained. Dwarf poinciana is perfectly suited to informal plantings. This is a beautiful, refreshing addition to any garden or yard as a specimen or as an accent toward the middle or back of a shrub border. Tipping the branches during the growing season creates a fuller shrub and more flowers. With some training and pruning, you can create a small, 12- to 15-foot-tall multi-stemmed tree, but the natural form is a low-branched, full, wide preading shrub about 10-feet tall and wide. Allow plenty of room for this plant to develop as a shrub.

Propagation is by seed, which germinate faster if scarified or soaked in hot water.

**Pests**

Scale will present an occasional problem.

**Diseases**

Dwarf Poinciana is susceptible to mushroom root rot, especially in poorly drained soil.