Introduction
A frost-tender, tropical, evergreen tree, tamarind is densely foliated with pale green, compound, feathery leaflets which give the broad, spreading crown a light, airy effect. Tamarind may reach heights of 65 feet and a spread of 50 feet but is more often seen smaller. The delicate leaflets cast a diffuse, dappled shade which will allow enough sunlight to penetrate for a lawn to thrive beneath this upright, dome-shaped tree.

General Information
Scientific name: Tamarindus indica
Pronunciation: tam-uh-RIN-dus IN-dih-kuh
Common name(s): Tamarind
Family: Leguminosae
USDA hardiness zones: 10A through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Invasive potential: has been evaluated using the UF/IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida’s Natural Areas (Fox et al. 2005). This species is not documented in any undisturbed natural areas in Florida. Thus, it is not considered a problem species and may be used in Florida.
Uses: street without sidewalk; shade; specimen; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median
Availability: not native to North America
**Description**

**Height:** 40 to 60 feet  
**Spread:** 40 to 50 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular  
**Crown shape:** vase, round  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** fine  

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** even-pinnately compound  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval), oblong  
**Leaf venation:** 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  

**Flower**

**Flower color:** red, yellow  
**Flower characteristics:** not showy  

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** elongated, pod or pod-like  
**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; showy; typically one trunk; thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  

**Current year twig color:** green, gray  
**Current year twig thickness:** thin  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

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

**Other**

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no  
**Outstanding tree:** yes  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown  
**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

The twigs and branches of tamarind are very resistant to wind, making it especially useful as a shade or street tree for breezy locations. But tamarind has low salt-tolerance so do not locate it close to the beach. In spring, small red and yellow flowers appear on short racemes and are followed by the production of brittle, brown, six-inch-long, velvety pods. These sticky pods are filled with a sweet-sour, dark brown paste which surrounds two or three seeds. They normally dry up and do not become messy but some people will undoubtedly object to the fruit falling on sidewalks or streets. Tamarind is grown commercially in the tropics for production of this edible paste, which is used as an ingredient for Worcestershire sauce, soft drinks, chutneys, and curries.

Tamarind should be grown only in frost-free regions in full sun on moist, fertile, sandy soil. It survived 26 degrees for several hours in West Palm Beach in the mid-1980s. Care should be taken in the placement of tamarind as the seed pods may be messy for a short period when they drop on hard surfaces. Also be sure to maintain a strong tree structure including major branches well-spaced along one central trunk.

Propagation is by seeds which germinate readily or by cuttings. If quality fruit is desired, plants should be air-layered, grafted, or shield-budded.
Pests and Diseases
No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Literature Cited