

# Tibouchina granulosa Purple Glory Tree<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen<sup>2</sup>

#### Introduction

This sprawling, evergreen shrub or small ornamental tree ranges from 10 to 15 feet (20 feet with proper training) in height. Older trees become much wider. It is the easiest tibouchina to train into a tree. It can be trimmed to any size and still put on a vivid flower display. The dark green, velvety, 4- to 6-inch-long leaves have several prominent longitudinal veins. Large, royal purple blossoms, flaring open to 2 inches, are held on terminal panicles above the foliage, creating a spectacular sight when in full bloom. Some flowers are open throughout the year, but they are especially plentiful from May to January.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Tibouchina granulosa*: Purple glory tree. Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Tibouchina granulosa*: Purple glory tree. Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Flower—*Tibouchina granulosa*: Purple glory tree. Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

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### **General Information**

Scientific name: Tibouchina granulosa

**Pronunciation:** tib-oo-KYE-nuh gran-yoo-LOW-suh

**Common name(s):** purple glory tree, Brazilian glorytree

Family: Melastomataceae

Plant type: tree

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Figure 4)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year-round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Uses:** near a deck or patio; screen; specimen; container or

above-ground planter; trained as a standard

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its

hardiness range

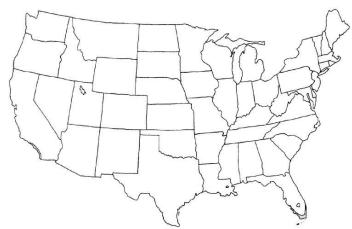


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## **Description**

Height: 15 to 20 feet

Spread: 15 to 20 feet

Plant habit: round; irregular outline or silhouette

Plant density: dense

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

#### **Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

Leaf margin: serrulate

Leaf shape: ovate

**Leaf venation:** parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

#### **Flower**

Flower color: purple

**Flower characteristic:** spring flowering; summer flowering;

fall flowering

#### **Fruit**

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than 0.5 inch

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

#### **Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not particularly showy; no thorns

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

#### **Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; acidic; well-drained; sand; loam

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: not applicable

#### **Other**

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by

pests

## **Use and Management**

Purple glory tree is ideal for the mixed shrubbery border or can be used in small groupings to compound the impact of bloom time. Trees can become nicely shaped with some early pruning to provide for strong, upright trunks. The canopy will need to be pruned regularly to keep lower branches from drooping to the ground.

Full sun is best for flowering and the plant will thrive on any well-drained soil when regularly watered. Its growth habit is somewhat weedy, requiring training and pruning, especially when it is young, to develop and maintain it as a tree. It can be trained as a standard or espaliered against a south- or west-facing wall receiving at least 5 hours of full sun. It can also be trained on a trellis or arbor as a vine. Pinching new growth helps increase branching and will enhance the flower display on small plants.

Propagation is by cuttings.

#### **Pests and Diseases**

Scales and nematodes can limit growth.

Mushroom root rot can occur in soil that is kept too wet.