

Scientific Name:

Erythrina lysistemon

Common Names:

common coral tree, lucky bean tree (Eng); gewone koraalboom, kanniedood (Afr); umsintsi, umkloka (isiXhosa); umsinsi (isiZulu); muvhale (Venda); mophete (Tsw)

Conservation Status

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Least Concern (LC)



Photo credit: Kerileigh Lobban

Plant Type / Size

Deciduous tree / Small – Medium (6 – 8 m high)

A fast-growing, undemanding, deciduous tree with a spreading crown, and member of the legume and pod-bearing family. The dark gray to gray-brown trunk has a smooth texture, thick, pale green-gray grooves and occasional hooked thorns or prickles. It sheds its attractive foliage in autumn before the striking deep orange-red, shuttlecock-shaped flowers decorate the sparse and spreading crowns during winter to early spring. Fruits form slender, black seed pods that are constricted between the seeds. When dry, the pods split open to release hard bright red seeds that have a black eye. The tree remains leafless for 4 - 5 months of the year and is ideal for areas in the garden that need sun in winter and shade in summer.

Flowering Season:

July - November

Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
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Drought Tolerance

Low	Moderate	High
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Gardening Skill Needed

Low	Moderate	High	Expert
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Pot Plant Potential

Poor	Moderate	Good	Excellent
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Best planted directly in the ground.

Water Regime

Water moderately when young. Performs best if watered during summer. Avoid watering in winter when the tree is dormant.



Soil Type

Clay or Loam. Fertile, well-aerated, well-drained soils.

Ideal Position

Full Sun
Natural: Scrub forest, woodlands and grasslands.



How to Propagate

Seeds: Soak seeds overnight in warm (not hot) water. Sow seeds in spring and summer in well-drained, potting soil. Keep soil moist. Place in a warm but shaded area.

Cuttings / Truncheons: Best taken in spring to summer / late winter to spring. Cut an entire or part of a branch and leave to dry and heal for a few days. Plant into sand or directly into soil where the plant is to be grown. Keep soil damp but not wet.

Maintenance Tips

This species has an aggressive root system. Do not plant near pools or walls. Transplanting should be done during winter, while plants are dormant. Please refer to "How to plant a tree successfully" International Society of Arboriculture: New Tree Planting http://www.treesaregood.com/portals/0/docs/treecare/New_TreePlanting.pdf.

Uses

Structural: Planted as living fences around kraals, homesteads and waterholes. Light and cork-like dry wood used to make canoes, rafts and floats for fishing nets.



Medicinal: The bark and/or crushed leaves have antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects and are used to ease childbirth, treat open sores, arthritis and ear ache. The seeds prevent blood-clotting and may be used to treat thrombosis.



Superstitious: Seed pods and seeds are used as lucky charms and to make jewelry.

Timing: Flowering of trees signals a good time to plant crops.

Animal Interaction / Ecology

Hollow trunks are used by bees and birds, such as woodpeckers, hornbills and barbets. Flowers attract insects and birds, such as bulbuls, sunbirds, mousebirds and white-eyes. Monkeys eat flower buds. Birds eat and disperse seeds. Bush pigs eat the roots.

