

Caesalpinia pulcherrima

Scientific classification

Kingdom : Plantae

Clade : Angiosperms

Order : Fabales

Family : Fabaceae

Genus : *Caesalpinia*

Species : *C. pulcherrima*



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DESCRIPTION

Caesalpinia pulcherrima is a species of flowering plant in the pea family, Fabaceae, native to the tropics and subtropics of the Americas. Leaves are bipinnately compound and opposite or sub-opposite in arrangement and 20 to 30 cm long. Each leaf has four to six pairs of pinnae and each pinna has 7 to 15 pairs of leaflets, which are oblong or ovate in shape. They are 1 to 1.5 cm long and have smooth margin. Flowers are caesalpinaceous, perfect or unisexual, in terminal and/or axillary racemes that are often aggregated into branched paniculate inflorescences, bracts caducous, bracteoles absent; calyx tube short, 5 lobed, lower lobe often covering the others, hood like; petals 5, imbricate, subequal or the upper one smaller and with a more developed claw; stamens 10, distinct, alternately longer and shorter; ovules usually 2-10. Fruit pods are flattened, rarely cylindrical, dehiscent or indehiscent, winged along the upper suture or unwinged. Seeds are 1-9, transversely arranged, ellipsoid or subglobose

Uses

The leaves, flower, bark, and seeds of *C. pulcherrima* were also used by American Indians in traditional medicine as abortifacients and for suicide by enslaved people.

The extract of shade-dried flowers has been shown to arrest the cell cycle, and cause the mitochondria to commit apoptosis and necroptosis

Ornamental uses

C. pulcherrima is the most widely cultivated species in the genus *Caesalpinia*. It is a striking ornamental plant, widely grown in domestic and public gardens in warm climates with mild winters, and has a beautiful inflorescence in yellow, red, and orange. Its small size and the fact that it tolerates pruning well allows it to be planted in groups to form a hedgerow; it can be also used to attract hummingbirds