

# Downey City Library

## Silk Floss Tree

Considered one of the most beautiful trees in the world, the Silk Floss Tree is a deciduous tropical plant from Brazil and Argentina. *Chorisia* is a large tree, which can grow to over 50 feet high with a spread as wide. Floss Silk Tree is well known for the large spikes protecting the trunk and limbs and the woody seed-pods which produce a soft silk that protects its seeds. The silk in the seeds pods was used to stuff life-jackets and pillows in an earlier time in history.



- Common Name: 'Monza' Floss Silk Tree, Silk Floss Tree, "Kapok tree"  
Botanical Name: *Chorisia speciosa*  
Family: Bombacaceae  
Plant Type: Deciduous tree  
Origin: Brazil, Argentina  
Zones: 9 - 11 (saplings are sensitive to frost but mature trees can tolerate temperatures to 20 degrees F for short periods of time).  
Height: 35 to 50' – width about the same so give it room  
Rate of Growth: Fast the first couple years, then slows considerably  
Soil Requirements: Well drained, moist, fertile humus  
Water Requirements: Water moderately, less water in winter  
Light Requirements: Full sun  
Form: Round  
Leaves: Alternate, 5-7 palmate leaves  
Flowers: Open, funnel-shaped flowers in October-November  
Fruits: Woody pods filled with fluffy silk  
Pests: Young plants affected by scale insects  
Uses: Specimen tree, recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway, shade tree, residential street tree  
Bad Habits: Leaf drop, fruit (pods) hard on lawn mowers and should be picked up before cutting turf under the tree  
Propagation: Sow seeds from spring to early summer