

Tamarindus Indica

Family: Leguminosae/Fabaceae

Will Tolerate Low Light Conditions. Great Indoor Bonsai
Zone: 10b-11

Background: Found throughout the tropical world but believed to be originally from Africa and Asia. The Tamarind tree can grow to 90 feet and has a large umbrella shaped crown with fine, fern like compound leaves that emerge bright redish orange and change to light green. The bark of a mature Tamarind is furrowed.

Features: When the Tamarind Tree is grown in the ground they will sometimes in early summer and often in the fall develop red buds which open to pale yellow three petaled flowers that are sometimes striped with red. These blooms are small and resemble orchid blooms. The blooms are followed by cinnamon colored scalloped pods that are edible and used in sauces, chutney, candies, beverages and other food items. Tamarind paste is widely used as well. You can find many Tamarind recipes. Normally, Tamarind tree bonsai grown in pots will not flower.

Fertilization/ p.H: Preferred ph is 5.5. Use an acid fertilizer weekly during the growing season and once a month during the winter. In early spring add a super phosphate to encourage blooming. Organic fertilizer is preferred.

Styles / Pruning / Training: Wiring can be done successfully on young branches and leaves can be reduced by defoliation several times during the growing season. This plant is a strong top grower, keep the top clipped or lower limbs will weaken and die back. Tamarinds can take a severe pruning to both branches and roots if done in the spring or early summer. The Tamarind tree will quickly sprout new branches from the trunk. Easily trained as bonsai.

Light / Water requirements: Full sun even after severe pruning of the roots and/or branches is best. The tree will respond sooner. The Tamarind is not drought tolerant. Regular watering is necessary for best results especially if it is in a bonsai pot.

Propagation: Seeds, cuttings and air-layering are all successful. The Tamarind is a slow grower, so obtaining a larger trunk is desirable.

Repotting Special Instructions: Repotting is preferrable done in spring after night temperatures stabilize in the low to mid 60's but can be repotted anytime throughout the summer.

Insects and Diseases: The Tamarind Tree can be susceptible to Scale, Leafspot, Caterpillars and Borers although not usually a problem.

Temperature Requirements: Tamarinds are tropical and needs to be protected when temperatures drop below 40 degrees F. The Tamarind has a moderate salt tolerance