

Tamarind Care Sheet



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online sources.)

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if
you were to live forever."
—Mahatma Gandhi—*

The Tamarind

(*Tamarindus indica*)

General Information: *Tamarindus indica* – an evergreen native of tropical Africa was introduced to India and Persia, where western botanists first described Tamarind as *Tamarindus indica*, the Arabic derivative of the Persian and Arabic name “tamar al-Hind”. From here, the tree was introduced widely throughout South East Asia, Taiwan and tropical China. Spanish and Portuguese colonists introduced Tamarind to Mexico and South America to such a degree that it became a common ingredient in everyday living. It has become the most widely distributed fruit tree in the world. In Asia its pulp is used as a flavoring agent in meal preparations and is also recognized as having many medicinal properties. In the Caribbean region the pulp is used to prepare juice and often used in ice cream.

Tamarind is long living and can reach heights of 80' to 100'. Trunk circumference can reach 25'. The tree is wind and salt resistant and is widely used as a shade tree. When the wood is burned it gives off an intense heat, and the resultant charcoal is used in the manufacture of gun powder. The bark of the Tamarind is nicely furrowed.

Foliage: Tamarind has a large umbrella shaped crown with fine, fern like compound leaves that emerge bright redish orange and change to light green. The compound adult leaves are bright green, dense, pinnate and alternate. They close at night and during draught conditions.

Flower/ fruit: Blooming in spring, the 1” wide

petaled flowers are yellow with orange streaks and are arranged in small racemes. 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, trees will produce flowers and fruit on new growth after about 8 to 10 years but Tamarind tree bonsai grown in pots will not flower.

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Temperature: Tamarinds are tropical and need to be protected when temperatures drop below 45°F. Zone: 10b-11.

Lighting: Full sun even after severe pruning of the roots and/or branches is best. The tree will respond sooner.

Watering: The Tamarind is not drought tolerant. If Tamarind wilts, irreversible foliage damage occurs. Regular watering is necessary for best results especially if it is in a bonsai pot. The Tamarind has a moderate salt tolerance.

Fertilizing: 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. Over fertilization prevents good ramification and causes long internodes. Cut back on high nitrogen fertilizer after new growth is established.

Pruning / Training: Use the clip and grow method with directional pruning. Drastic trunk/branch pruning should be done between May and August. Wiring can be done successfully on young branches and leaves can be re-

duced 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.

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

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

Repotting: Repotting is preferably done in spring after night temperatures stabilize in the low to mid 60's, just as the new buds appear but can be repotted anytime throughout the summer. Prefers a well draining sandy soil. In nature can be found on sandy beaches, as well as any other kind of soil condition. Root prune carefully and gradually; remove the same percentage of foliage and roots.

Design and Styling: Informal upright