

INVASIVE PLANT: African Tulip Tree (*Spathodea campanulata* , Orsachel Kui)

DESCRIPTION: A very fast growing tree with large orange flowers. The African Tulip Tree is a large shade-tolerant tree that can reach heights of 60-70 feet. The leaves are similar to mahogany leaves; the bark of the tree is light-colored and almost smooth. Seeds are produced in large pods which split open when mature, allowing hundreds of seeds to be spread by the wind. Seedlings can grow in the shade, eventually growing up taller than native trees and shading them out. African Tulip Trees rapidly re-grow when cut, and also send up shoots from the roots. The trees can survive fires, and quickly re-grow after fires, or when knocked down by strong winds in tropical storms and typhoons.

THREAT: Over a period of time, African Tulip Trees can crowd out native forest trees, changing the composition of native forests. The loss of native trees can result in less food for native birds, bats, and other fruit-eating animals. Because the trees can survive fires and storms, they recover faster than many native trees. This tree is causing serious problems in Fiji, Hawai'i, and other tropical Pacific islands with climate and soil similar to Palau.

CURRENT STATUS: African Tulip Tree has been found in Airai, Aimeliik, and Koror.



This tree is the target of an eradication campaign by the Bureau of Agriculture and the Palau Natural Resource Council, with the support of several other organizations and agencies. The campaign has reduced the number of trees, but some large trees and many seedlings still remain to be killed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Please do not plant this tree! The public is requested to report any sightings of African Tulip Tree to Joseph Tiobech, the Invasive Weeds Eradication Officer at the Bureau of Agriculture, telephone number 544-5804, or to Joel Miles at OERC, 488-8681.

