

Bead Tree, Chinaberry, Persian Lilac, Pride of India

Melia is also called Bead Tree, Chinaberry, Persian Lilac and Pride of India. Melia azedarach is a deciduous tree that reaches a height of between 6 and 17 metres with a spread of up to 12 metres. Azederach comes from the Persian ‘azad dirakht’, and means ‘the gorgeous tree’. It originates from southwest Asia and western China. It has a broad open crown and often develops multi-branches. The fresh-green leaves are arranged alternately, with an ovate form and dentate margins. The lilac, violet and whitish-yellow flowers appear in spring, in panicles up to 25 cm long. The single flowers are about 1.5 cm in size. The tree flowers after three or four years for the first time. After flowering, the tree develops attractive round yellow berries, each about 1 cm in size. Prayer beads were once made from the seeds. Occasional pruning of the tree is recommended. Propagation can be done by seed and in good conditions by self-seeding and by runners. The Bead Tree normally grows in regions with an annual rainfall of between 600 and 1,000 mm. Accordingly, the tree responds well to air humidity and regular irrigation. It can also withstand medium salinity. As a younger tree, it may suffer from winter frost. In Arriyadh, it can be found in the Diplomatic Quarter in the inner Tuwaiq Palace garden. For use, it is recommended that this tree be planted in protected areas with appropriate microclimates, such as in parks or larger gardens, where it is also protected from wind damage. It is beautiful as a specimen tree or in small groups.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: high (3500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -12°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree
Height	: 6 m-17 m
Spread	: 8 m-12 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: lilac, violet, yellow
Size	: 15 cm - 25 cm
Period	: May - June
Smell	: scented, moderate, flower, sweet

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: berry
Fruit size	: 0.8 cm - 1.4 cm
Toxicity	: poisonous