

Crown-of-Gold Tree, *Golden Shower*, khiyar shambar

GENERAL

Origin	: tropical
Vigour	: 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, high
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree
Height	: 10 m-20 m
Spread	: 8 m-12 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: bright yellow
Size	: 20 cm - 30 cm
Period	: March - April
Smell	: scented, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 40 cm - 50 cm
Toxicity	: poisonous

This native from southern Asia retains some leaves during mild winters to shed these just before flowering. The Golden Shower Tree, known in Arabic as khiyar shambar, deserves its name for a spectacular floral display in spring before new leaves emerge. Some pendant, yellow flowers still show up during summer. They are lightly fragrant. The tree grows slowly to form a wide canopy in time, reaching up to 10 metres in height and even 20 metres in its native environment. Often planted in Arriyadh, it does not always grow well owing the lack of humidity and to its susceptibility to chlorosis and frost damage. Its bark is pale grey and smooth when young, becoming dark brown and rough with age. The bright-green leaves are pinnate with pairs of ovate leaflets. Bright yellow flowers are borne on drooping racemes that may reach 60 cm in length. Single flowers are about 6 cm in diameter. They are followed by indehiscent pods that contain up to 100 poisonous seeds. It takes them about a year to ripen. When spent flowers are discarded, a second flowering may take place in autumn. The Golden Shower Tree grows in full sun but tolerates some shade, a little salinity and alkaline soil. Well-drained soil is essential and some drought is tolerated. Seeds should be scarified before sowing. In Arriyadh, its landscape value includes specimen trees in private gardens and parks. Falling seedpods may cause a litter problem. For frequent heavy flowering, terminal branches on young trees should be pruned to a side bud at the end of the flowering season.

