



SOPHORA JAPONICA

Fam. Fabaceae

DESCRIPTION

Deciduous tree, with slow growth; it can grow up to 25 metres tall.

HABITAT

The "Japanese pagoda tree" is a species native to China and Korea; it was introduced in Japan in very remote times.

DISTRIBUTION

Imported into Europe in the eighteenth century, it is characterised by stunning flowering and an elegant habit: for these reasons, it is mainly used as an ornamental species also in Italy.

FLOWERS

Papilionaceous, hermaphrodite, yellowish-white flowers, bundled in racemes that form panicles hanging from the ends of the branches. The flowers contain a substance known as rutin. Flowering occurs in summer between June and July and lasts until the beginning of autumn. The flowers are widely appreciated for their beauty and very sweet scent.

LEAVES

Deciduous, petiolate and pinnate leaves, up to 25 cm long, with 7 to 17 ovate leaflets, whitish when young, then glossy dark-green on the upper face and green-blue and hairy on the lower one. They turn golden yellow in autumn, before falling off.

FRUITS

Fleshy loment with kinks that recall the shape of pearl necklaces. They are initially intense green and turn brown when ripe (December). The fruits contain orbicular seeds.

STEM

The trunk is covered with a grey-brownish bark that tends to crack in tortuous grooves.

INTERESTING FACTS

Japanese pagoda tree wood is used in different fields. Besides its ornamental purpose, the plant is utilised in the pharmaceutical field, thanks to its content of rutin (from which troxerutin is obtained, used in the treatment of capillary fragility). A yellow dye used for fabrics can be obtained from the flower buds.

ROOTS

Branched, fibrous and deep root system.

