

# *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Kuntze

## Systematic Position

Kingdom: Plantae

Phylum: Tracheophyta

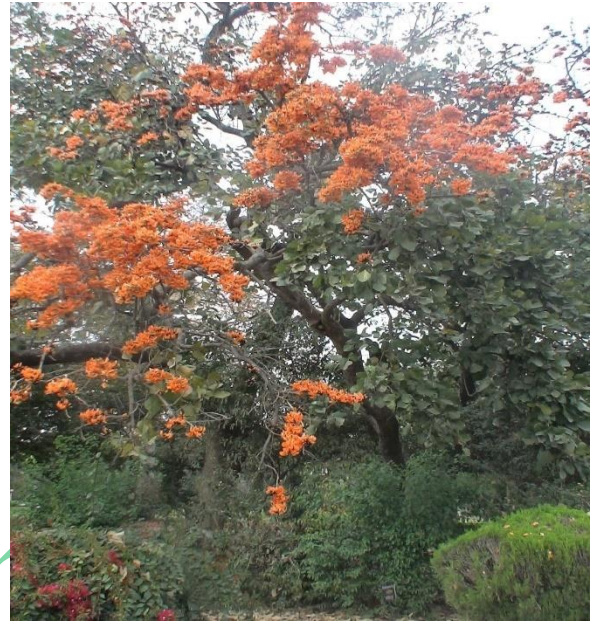
Class: Equisetopsida

Order: Fabales

Family: Fabaceae

Genus: *Butea*

Species: *Butea monosperma*



**Popular names:** Flame of the forest, Dhak, Palas, Palasha, Tesu, Moduga.

**Nature:** Tree

**Flowering time:** February to April

**Fruiting time:** May to July

**Plant distribution:** It is native of tropical and sub-tropical parts of the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia and ranging across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and western Indonesia.

## Gardening notes:

**1. Light:** It requires full sun for proper growth.

**2. Water:** It has average water requirement.

**3. Propagation:** By seeds.

### **Economic importance:**

1. Leaves used throughout the country for making platters, cups etc.
2. Dried leaves used as beedi wrappers.
3. Young shoots yield a fiber used for ropes.
4. The bark yields a dye known as kina, used during holi festival.
5. The plant serves as host for the lac insect.
6. It is used in medicine preparation for the treatment of worm infestation, diarrhea, dysentery, chronic indolent ulcers, bronchitis and fevers.
7. The flowers yield a yellow dye.
8. The ripe fruits are edible.
9. The tree is regarded as holy since it is considered to be sacred to Lord Brahma because of its tri-foliolate leaves.
10. The timber is used for making well-curbed and scoops.
11. It is also burnt to make gunpowder-grade charcoal.

**Plant description:** It is a medium sized dry season-deciduous tree, growing to 25 feet tall.

**Root-** Tap root, branched; **Stem-** Aerial, erect, branched, branches twisted and irregular, cylindrical, solid, woody, crooked, bark- fibrous, brown or grey, rough;

**Leaf-** Compound, trifoliolate, unipinnate, imparipinnate, petiolate, petiole long, 7-10 cm long, green, hairy, pulvinus base, stipulate, stipules, 2, small, green, 3 leaflets, rough, thick, velvety, adaxial surface dark green, abaxial surface light green, blade 7-9 cm long, 7-9 cm wide, petiolulate, petiolule small, 1-2 cm long, shed in february-march, unicostate reticulate venation, entire margins;

**Inflorescence-** Racemose.

**Flower-** Bright flaming scarlet orange, in clusters, complete, hermaphrodite, hypogynous, bracteate, bracts small, brown, hairy, zygomorphic, pedicellate, pedicel hairy, brown, 2-4 cm long, curved, ; Sepals – 5, gamosepalous, inferior, brown, hairy, valvate aestivation; Petals- 5, orange, polypetalous, papilionaceous, descending imbricate, odd petal, posterior (standard or vexillum), largest, two lateral petals (the alae or wings) and the two inner or anterior petals (the keel or carina); Stamens- 10, diadelphous, 9 united to form a staminal tube around the ovary, the 10th, posterior one free, dorsifixed anthers, small, yellow, introse, inferior; Carpel – 1, ovary superior, unilocular, numerous ovules, marginal placentation, style long, curved, hairy base, greenish yellow, stigma terminal.

**Fruit-** A legume, thin, greyish-green or velvety, upto 12 cm long, few seeds, flattened;  
Seed- Small, brown, flattened,

Flora of KONA



**Fig. 1:** *Butea monosperma* (a) tree (b) flowers (c) leaves (d) seeds.  
kidney shaped.

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