

Pseudobombax ellipticum – Shaving Brush Tree

Quick Facts

Common Names	Shaving Brush Tree, Amapolla Tree, Mexican Cotton Tree
Scientific Name	<i>Pseudobombax ellipticum</i>
Family	Malvaceae (subfamily Bombacoideae)
Origin	Southern Mexico, Central America, parts of the Caribbean
Type	Winter-deciduous tropical tree; caudiciform habit
Mature Size	15–40 ft tall in cultivation, trunk up to 4 ft wide
Flowers	Large brush-like stamens; pink, white, or red; blooms late winter–spring
Leaves	Palmately compound with 5 elliptical leaflets
Fruit	6-inch capsules with kapok fibers surrounding seeds
USDA Hardiness	Zones 9b–11
Special Features	Water-storing trunk, drought-tolerant, culturally significant

Care Instructions

Light	Full sun to partial shade; at least 6 hrs sunlight daily
Temperature	Best above 55°F; tolerates short drops to 25–30°F
Watering	Moderate; water deeply during growth, allow slight drying; reduce in dormancy
Soil	Well-draining loam/sand mix; amend heavy soil with organic matter
Fertilizer	Balanced (5-10-5) in spring; avoid excess nitrogen
Humidity	Prefers 50–60%; use pebble trays or humidifiers indoors
Pruning	Minimal; shape after flowering and when leaves emerge
Propagation	Best from seed; cuttings possible but less reliable
Pests/Diseases	Generally pest-resistant; monitor for aphids, mealybugs, scale; avoid overwatering
Toxicity	Mildly toxic to pets and humans if ingested; sap may irritate skin

References

Planet Desert. “Soil Cactus Mix Blend.” <https://planetdesert.com>

San Marcos Growers. “Pseudobombax ellipticum.”

https://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant_id=4437

Plant Care Today. “Pseudobombax Ellipticum Care.” <https://www.plantcaretoday.com>