

## *Adenanthera pavonina* L.

peronías

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**Other common names.** jumbie-bead

**Occurrence and growth habit.** Originally from tropical Asia, this genus has spread to parts of tropical Africa and America that have 1,300 to 2,100 mm of rainfall, soil pH 5.0 to 7.5, and nutrient-rich soils with moist but well-drained profiles. It maintains a common abundance relative to other competitors (Francis and Liogier 1991). PeroníasC*Adenanthera pavonina* L.Chas large bipinnate leaves, 30 to 60 cm in length, and narrow, erect flower clusters with shiny scarlet seeds. The medium-sized deciduous tree can be 13 m tall and 45 cm in trunk diameter, with brown, smooth bark (Little and Wadsworth 1964). Two other speciesCA. *microsperma* Teysm. & Binn. and *A. bicolor* Moon Care similar but smaller (Neal 1965). Only a small number of species are included in the genus. Gunn (1984) recognizes only the following 5 speciesCA. *abrosperma* F. v. Mueller, *A. bicolor*, *A. intermedia* Merrill, *A. pavonina* L. var. *microsperma*, and *A. pavonina* L. var. *pavonina*. Only *A. pavonina* var. *pavonina* is commonly found in the American tropics, where it has naturalized in Puerto Rico (Francis and Liogier 1991).

**Use.** The mature trees are good shade trees but not particularly ornamental (Neal 1965), although they are valued for their attractive feathery foliage and bright red seeds in Nyasaland (Streets 1962). Peronías is also planted as a hedge in Asia, where it is called peacock flower fence (Bailey 1941). Its sapwood is light brown and hard, and its heartwood is hard and red. The heavy, hard wood (specific gravity 0.6 to 0.8) makes durable, strong furniture. It is used locally for poles and firewood as well as a source of red dye (Little and Wadsworth 1964). It gets its Asian common nameCred sandalwoodCfrom its use as a substitute for sandalwood. The red seeds are known as ACircassian seeds@ and used for bead work. An interesting (but questionable) use is as commercial weights for goldsmiths and silversmiths, who claim each seed is a uniform 4 grains (Neal 1965).

**Flowering and fruiting.** Flowers are borne on racemes (either lateral or terminal) on short stalks 3 mm long and may be pale yellow to white. The small, inconspicuous flowers have a sweet smell and form axillary clusters during the hot, humid season. The fruits mature in the dry season and remain on the tree several months as dark brown legumes (pods) that measure 10 to 20 mm wide and 15 to 20 cm long and are twisted. They readily split and show seeds attached to the smooth, yellow interior. There are about 3,500 seeds/kg, about 1,580 seeds/lb (Bailey

1941; Little and Wadsworth 1964; Neal 1965; Troup 1921). Seeds store well with no special techniques required (Francis 1994).

**Germination.** Although presoaking is helpful, seeds will germinate with no pre-germination treatment. Several reports do, however, suggest that germination is enhanced by hot-wire scarification (Sandiford 1988) and sulfuric acid exposure (Ahmed and others 1983; Xu and Gu 1985). Francis and Rodriguez (1993) report 86% germination of mechanically scarified seeds held for 6 days on blotter paper at ambient temperature (24 to 30 °C).

**Nursery practice.** Although there are no printed reports of nursery practices, seeds readily germinate along moist roadsides. Peronías will readily propagate from cuttings planted during rainy periods (Troup 1921).

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