



## Horseflesh Mahogany (Lysiloma) Care Sheet

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Brought to you by  
S & S Bonsai of Colorado Springs, Colorado  
(Most of the included information is obtained from several  
online sources.)



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*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if  
you were to live forever."*  
—*Mahatma Gandhi*—

# The Horseflesh Mahogany

(Wild Tamarind)

(*Lysiloma sabicu*)

**General Information:** Large weeping, evergreen tree native to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola.

With age the rustic, scaly bark becomes grayish/cinnamon colored. The leaves are rounded at the tip having only 3-7 pairs of ovate to obviate leaflets. The growth rate is medium with high salt and drought tolerance.

Lysiloma has everything you want in a bonsai. Small leaves, small powder-puff flower and rustic bark. The tree is deciduous, it drops all its leaves around December and stays dormant until the end of February, but the roots cannot be worked on at this time. The tree is tropical and is treated like a *Bucida spinosa* (Black Olive).

The wood is used in boat building.

The bark is gray-brown and very rough: it breaks into long uneven strips. Leaves are dark green with a dull surface and the underside is pale green.

Dense white powder puff flowers appear in early Summer and until Fall. Fruit pods appear in summer and throughout the year. Brown fruit pod grows 3-4 inches with a slight twist.

## CARE

**Temperature:** Protect below 50°F. Cold sensitive.

**Lighting:** Grown in full sun to partial shade.

**Watering:** Regular watering in a well-draining soil.

**Fertilizing:** Use a balanced fertilizer.

**Pruning / Training:** As the leaves are small, the aim is to reduce the internodes to create a full canopy. Moderate root pruning is advised. Reduce root mass gradually. Growth rate is medium and branches can be wired. During a cold winter the tree might lose all its leaves. In that case treat like a deciduous tree, in order for the tree to recover its vigor.

**Insects / Pests:** No major pests noted.

**Propagation:** Nursery stock, bonsai growers as bonsai or pre-bonsai.

**Repotting:** When average night temperatures are above 70°F. Use a well-draining bonsai mix. PH 6.5-7.5.

**Design and Styling:** Informal upright serves best with the way this tree "weeps".

Other Species: (Family: Fabaceae - Pea Family)

**Latisiliqua (L. Sabicu)** – Large weeping, evergreen tree native to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola. With age the rustic, scaly bark becomes grayish/cinnamon colored. The leaves are rounded at the tip having only 3-7 pairs of ovate to obviate leaflets. The growth rate is medium with high salt and drought tolerance. Sabicu is more commonly available for bonsai.

**Bahamensis** – Commonly known as Cuban Tamarind, bahamensis will grow up to 50'. Its short, slender trunk is topped with long arching branches forming an umbrella-like silhouette. Leaves are large, with 2-5 pairs of pinnae, with a large gland below the lowest, leaflets in 10-30 pairs with pointed tips. New and older growth appear together. Its wood is used for flooring under various names: Caribbean Walnut, Mayan Walnut or Aztec Walnut.

**Watsonii subsp. thornberi** - A shrub or small tree native to the Rincon Mountains, Arizona, its height is 12-15'. In the mature tree the bark is rough. Leaves with 6-8 pairs of pinnae, to 6" long, leaflets in 20-35 pairs. This Lysiloma is more cold hardy than sabicu and bahamensis.