

# Garden Update Flowering Trees at MOUNTS

By Sandy Sklar, Communications Director

Photos were entries in MOUNTS' 1st Annual Photo Contest

The Candle-fruit tree (*Parmentiera cereifera*), photo #1, was taken by Katherine T. Morgan of Boca Raton. The tree is located near the front of the Garden just west of the Pavilion. It was severely damaged by the hurricanes of 2004, has sent out lots of new growth since then, and is doing well despite Hurricane Wilma. This tree's white trumpet-like flowers are produced directly on the trunk of the tree and from them emerge the pale yellow, waxy fruit, about eight inches long. The tree is a conversation piece during the spring and summer when in bloom and fruiting. It is native to the humid, limestone woodlands of Panama.

Photo #2 was submitted by Judith A. Mugarce of West Palm Beach. The pink-flowered Shaving Brush tree is *Pseudobombax ellipticum*. (It has also been known in the past as *Bombax ellipticum* and *Pachira fastuosa*.) A large specimen is located on the eastern edge of the island, and another is located just inside the Golf Street entrance gate and south of the water catchment. Also located inside the gate, north of the water catchment, is a white-flowering variety (*Pseudobombax ellipticum*, var. *album*), shown in photo #4 by Lynda Younker of Lantana. Flowers form on the deciduous tree while it is bare of leaves. Flowers of either color are striking with their long, silky stamens and curling brown petals. According to Gene Joyner, the white variety begins blooming around Thanksgiving and continues through the end of January. The pink-flowering tree will begin to bloom around the end of January for only about four weeks. These trees are native to Mexico and Central America; they grow fairly fast and are salt tolerant. All three specimens at MOUNTS sustained quite a bit of damage from hurricane Wilma.

Photo #5 is the exuberant Royal Poinciana (*Delonix regia*). Originally from Madagascar, this tree is now rare in the wild, although due to its colorful and graceful beauty, it is grown throughout the tropics.

Its spreading form demands a large, sunny site; it grows rapidly attaining maturity in five to seven years from seed. The aggressive roots can be a problem if planted near sidewalks, septic tanks or pools. Interestingly, the Royal Poinciana is sensitive to light and its blooms may be reduced on the side of the tree facing street lights. This salt tolerant tree is sensitive to frost, but that's not going to prevent gardeners in Zone 9 from planting it. MOUNTS' Royal Poinciana is still standing after taking a battering. It has become the only standing icon in the Garden now that the Bougainvillea arbor has been shattered, the Sausage trees destroyed and the

Rainbow and White Eucalyptus trees are gone. Even with all the damage it has sustained, it will likely produce more shade than any other single specimen in the Garden. We're all glad it still here. This photo was taken by Joan Murname of Boynton Beach.

The Weeping Bottle Brush (*Callistemon viminalis*) is an evergreen, small, shrubby tree native to Australia and New South Wales. It usually has multiple trunks, a low-branching habit and blooms predominantly in spring. The Bottle Brush is grown throughout South and Central Florida. Photo #6 by Joan's husband, Bob Murname, is titled "Last Drop."

