

TAXONOMY & ECOLOGY

Beyond Classical Approaches

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LANDSCAPE TREES WITH COLOURFUL FLOWERS AND COLOURFUL FLUSHED FOLIAGES AT UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

The Landscape Master Plan of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) has listed the planting of trees bearing colourful flowers and colourful flushed-foliage to occupy the designed landscape area, especially along the main ring road, parking area and around buildings. The planting of trees species having these characteristic will improve the aesthetic and environmental qualities and blend well with the other hardscape of the surroundings. Study was conducted in UNIMAS west campus that involved the documentation of 3 tree species that produced colourful flowers and 5 tree species with colourful flushed-foliages. The duration of tree blooming and flushing were also observed and recorded. *Plumeria obtusa* had the longest flowering period which was 65 days while *Syzygium campanulatum* had the longest flushing period which was 19 days. However, individual trees produce flowers and flushes at different time giving the impression that tree flower and flush all year round. The observations were carried out mainly in the month December 2009 as most of the studied trees started to bloom and flushed at that time. Moreover the month of December has the highest total rainfall, which is believed to contribute to the flowering and flushing of the studied trees. Knowledge on flowering and flushing of planted tree and their relationship with the environmental condition was important as it will influence the trees growth performance and their placement in the overall design of the landscape.

Keywords: colourful flowers, colourful flushed foliage, function, duration, rainfall

INTRODUCTION

The planting of tropical tree species along the roadside, in the parks and home garden has changed significantly the landscape of the urban environment. The contribution of trees and forests to the beauty of the urban environment is well documented (Schroeder, 1989), but their influence on urbanites go deeper than visual esthetics. The increasing recognition of tree roles in reducing urban heat islands, global warming, noise and air pollution (Schmid, 1975) had enhance the need of planting more tree in the urban landscape. Trees and shrub that are properly and wisely placed can greatly improve home heating and cooling capacity (American Forest Assoc., 2003). The broad canopy provide cooling effects on microclimate directly by shading the broad surface and indirectly through transpiration (Scott *et al.*, 1999). Presence of trees close to the building helps in soften the outline of the building and at the same time cutting down the heat and glare from the rooms (Chin & Enoch, 1992).

Besides, trees with their colourful flowers and colourful newly flushed foliage uplift the visual aesthetic values of the parks and urban sceneries. A properly design park and garden planted with a combination of trees, shrub and herbaceous plant will create a field of colours all year round. However, such environment will only be achieved if one knows how each tree, shrub and herb grow.

The University Malaysia Sarawak's Landscape Master Plan has listed numerous tree species as the backbone of the campus landscape. Trees like *Dyera costulata*, *Plumeria obtuse*, *Syzygium campanalatum*, *Alstonia angustiloba*, *Messua ferra* and *Andira surinamensis* are some of the These trees were planted along the ring road in the west campus have contributed to the aesthetic values to the scenery. The selection of tree species will enhance the ability to combine colours of the flowers and also the newly flushed foliage. For example African Tulip (*Spathodea campanulata*) is a