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African Tulip Tree

Spathodea campanulata

For weeks abundant flowers out of every bud

Worth Knowing: The evergreen African Tulip Tree grows up to two meters and can easily be cultivated as a tub plant. After a few years, the on long stalks sitting inflorescences stand out of the canopy of dark-green coloured pinnate leaves. The spectacular flowers of the *Spathodea campanulata* open up in batches, so every blossom is changing constantly over a couple of weeks. Initially the outer blossom rings will open up with orange and red painted and on the edges curly yellow coloured leaves. Each time the ray florets wither after two days and the next batch of buds pushes forward. This way the blossoming is going on for many weeks. The unopened flower buds of the African Tulip Tree spill a fountain of water when pressed, and by doing so, attracts in its natural habitat bats as pollinators.

Natural Location: The natural habitat of the *Spathodea campanulata* is along the African Atlantic Coast from Ghana until Angola and even further into Sudan and Uganda. Nowadays the African Tulip Tree is also being cultivated as a decorative plant outside of Africa and can e

Cultivation: Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. The fine seeds of the African Tulip Tree don't need any initial treatment and can just be spread onto moist potting compost and covered with a thin layer of compost earth. Then, cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out, but don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm with a temperature between 20°C and 25° Celsius and keep the earth moist, but not wet. Usually it takes two to three weeks until germination.

Place: As a tropical plant the African Tulip Tree appreciates a very bright and sunny place. During summer it can be kept in a wind-protected sunny spot outdoors on your balcony or in the garden.

Care: The African Tulip Tree prefers nutritious and permeable soil containing a fair part of expanded clay or gravel. It needs steady and sufficient watering, but avoid waterlogging in the saucer. From April until October it is recommended to give fertilizer for tub plants on a regular basis, about every 10 days. The plant should be shifted every two to three years to the next bigger sized pot.

During the winter: The African Tulip Tree is not frost-resistant and its roots will take damage when kept at temperatures below 3° Celsius. During winter it is best to keep the plant in a bright and warm spot under room temperature, but avoid placing it next to a heater. Starting from the third year, the tree will produce the first flowers already in the first months of the year.