



## *Cupaniopsis anacardiopsis* Carrotwood<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This compact, single-trunked, evergreen tree has four-inch-long, glossy, dark green, divided leaflets and makes an ideal shade, specimen, patio or poolside tree (Fig. 1). It is popular in many yards and is used as a small to medium-sized street tree spaced about 20 feet apart. The insignificant small lime-green flowers are followed by 1/2-inch diameter, green fruits which split open to reveal seeds but do not squash or stain. The seeds germinate in the landscape and may be a litter problem. There have been some reports of carrotwood becoming invasive along coastal islands of Florida so use caution in planting in these areas. In addition, the seeds may be disseminated by birds which would make it easy for the tree to spread rapidly into native hammocks.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Cupaniopsis anacardiopsis*

**Pronunciation:** koo-pan-nee-OP-sis  
an-nuh-kar-dee-OP-sis

**Common name(s):** Carrotwood

**Family:** *Sapindaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** not recommended for planting

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

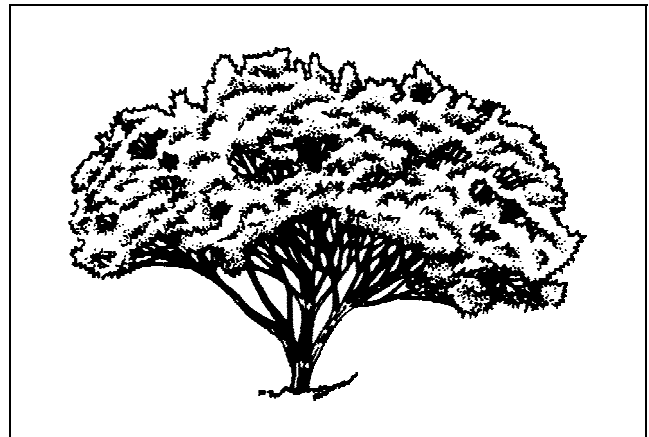


Figure 1. Mature Carrotwood.

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 25 to 35 feet

**Spread:** 25 to 35 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** round

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** medium

**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** odd pinnately compound

**Leaflet margin:** entire; undulate

**Leaflet shape:** elliptic (oval); oblong

**Leaflet venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-221, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaflet blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** green

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** irregular; round

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** green; orange

**Fruit characteristics:** attracts birds; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** brown

**Current year twig thickness:** thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

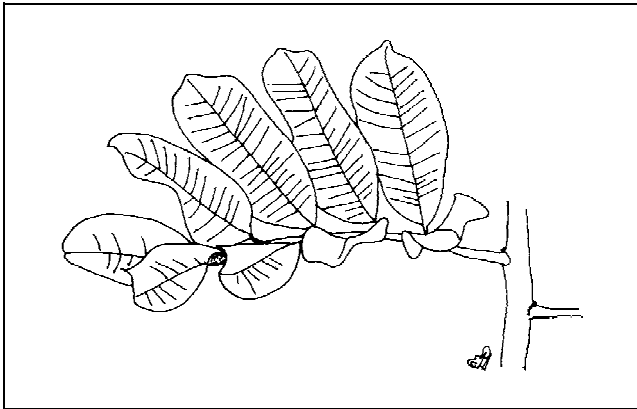
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerance:** good

### Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Carrotwood.

trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** No entries found.

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

Carrotwood tolerates poor, dry or wet soils, full sun, and hot, salty winds. It is truly a durable, urban-tolerant tree, able to grow even in confined planting pits in downtown sidewalks. Perhaps it is best used in these areas. It is deep-rooting on well-drained soils and will tolerate drought. Selected, upright branches in the crown can be removed to allow for more light penetration and better turf growth under the crown. If not, the dense canopy will shade out all but the most shade-tolerant plants. The wood is bright apricot-colored in cross-section, and resists breakage because it is hard. If you cut one down, save the wood. Wood-workers enjoy turning it on a lathe and making spindles and bowls.

Propagation is by seed.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

Warning: Use with caution since the tree has become invasive in south Florida. Commonly used as a street tree in southern California.