

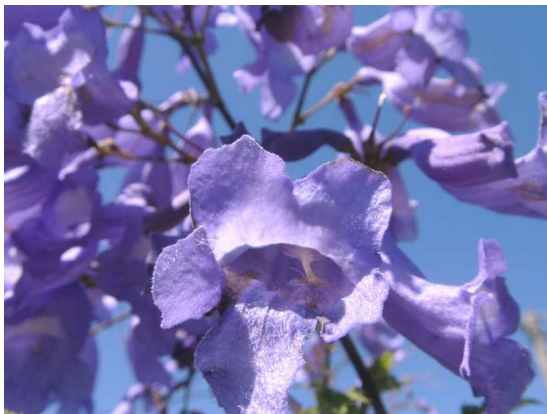
**Informationen zur Umwelt und für Naturreisende auf Kreta:**  
Information about the Environment and for travellers in Crete:**The Blue Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia* D. DON<sup>1</sup>)**

The **Blue Jacaranda**, *Jacaranda mimosifolia* more often known simply as the "Jacaranda", is a plant species from the family of Trumpet creeper (*Bignoniaceae*) within the category of mint family (*Lamiales*). We saw this "blue-blooded tree" in recent years in Crete very often, among other on the road from *Mires* to *Gortys* (South Crete), shortly before the local archaeological site on the left side of the road (see fig.). It is planted on the roadsides of Crete but also increasingly as shoulder borderline, in particularly in North-east Crete, for example on the route *Agios Nikolaos – (Ierapetra) – Sitia*.



The original geographic range of the Blue Jacaranda is South America. Today it is planted worldwide due to its striking blue flowers as ornamental tree in appropriate climate zones. The tree is cold sensitive, but can sustain up to - 7 ° C. Because of his tendency to overgrowing it is however considered as invasive plant, threatening biodiversity. The genus *Jacaranda* exist of about 50 species, it is a medium- to large-sized tree.

Jacaranda grows as decidual tree and reaches growth heights of 5 to 20 metres. Its bark is thin and grey-brown (see fig. left)



The double pinnate leaves (see figure above right) are 15-35 cm long and 10-20 cm wide, with 10 – 20 pinnate of first order. Pinnate of first order consist of 15-25 sessile leaflets that have a length of 3-12 mm and a width of up to 4 mm.

Flowering takes up to 2 months. The flowers (see fig. left) are arranged in a paniculate inflorescence. The hermaphrodite, five numbered flowers are up to 5 cm long and 4 cm wide. The 5 Blue to violet petals are bell-like connate. The pistil ends in a two-lobed stigma.

The flat, leathery, reddish-brown seed pods have a diameter of 50 mm and contain many seeds. The seeds are surrounded by a skin-like wing (see fig. blow right). The fig. left shows the seed pods on the tree.



The well-known "Palisander wood" is by the way, not from trees of the genus *Jacaranda*; but from trees of the genus *Dalbergia* which belongs to the *leguminous*. The wood of many species of this genus is a coveted wood. Most of these woods are called "Palisander"; because of their aromatically fragrance some are also called "Rosewood". The wood of *Jacaranda* is too soft to serve as timber.

**Pictures:** NLUK e.V. (4); Detail picture source (3): [[http://www.baumkunde.de/Jacaranda\\_mimosifolia/](http://www.baumkunde.de/Jacaranda_mimosifolia/)]

More information about *Jacaranda mimosifolia*: [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacaranda\\_mimosifolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacaranda_mimosifolia)]

<sup>1</sup> D. DON: David Don (21 December 1799 – 15 December 1841) was a Scottish botanist.