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## White Orchid Tree

*Bauhinia variegata candida*

*Leaves like butterfly wings and light aromatic white flowers*

**Worth Knowing:** The magnificent small tree is a real beauty as a tub plant and impresses not only with neat incised leaves that resemble the wings of a butterfly, but also with an abundance of light aromatic flowers. In late spring the White Orchid Tree is covered in five-petalled white flowers that can become up to 12 cm big. Since the blossoms spring at the same time as the new sprouts or shortly before, the tree initially appears to be much dominated by the flowers, until the foliage is keeping up with the blossoming and changes the sight. The Bauhinia can easily be pruned and is perfectly suited for cultivation as a tub plant.

**Natural Location:** The attractive Orchid Tree originally comes from the tropical South East Asia.

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase the germinability, you should place the seeds overnight in warm water for priming. Then, plant the seeds about 1 cm deep into moist potting compost and cover the seed container with clear film to prevent the earth from drying out. 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. The germination takes about two to four weeks.

**Place:** Your plant wants to be kept in a warm and sunny place; during summer preferably in a wind-protected spot outdoors.

**Care:** Since the White Orchid Tree grows a rather short stem, pruning is rarely necessary, but can easily be done after blossoming. Water the plant regularly, but avoid waterlogging. Ideally you may set up a drainage layer with perlite or expanded clay at the bottom of the pot. From April until August you should give fertilizer for tub plants every two to three weeks.

**During the winter:** Your Orchid Tree is not frost-resistant and should be moved indoors ahead of the first frost. It preferably hibernates in a bright spot with a temperature between 10° and 15° Celsius; but it is also possible to keep your plant at room temperature during winter. Anyway, the cooler its place, the more likely it will cast the leaves and has to be watered accordingly in smaller amounts, just so the clotted roots are not drying out.