Scholar Tree
Styphnolobium japonicum

flower
fruit
leaf
tree
seed
stem
bumble bee

Match the picture on the left with the word on the right.

(Drawings are not to scale.)
History
One of the most famous of all Chinese trees, the scholar tree has been planted in gardens and temple grounds for over 2,000 years. In China, it is the symbol of the 8th moon (September) when the official examinations for political positions took place and was cultivated by aspiring scholars. It also has been described as the tree designated for planting on the graves of scholars.

The scholar tree is also called the Japanese pagoda tree, but don’t let the name fool you. This tree is originally from China; it has also been grown in the United States for almost 200 years. The scholar tree is now a popular garden and street tree. You might even find the tree along the streets of Boston.

What makes the scholar tree special?
- This tree has beautiful white flowers in August after most other trees have finished blooming.
- The fruits form quickly after the flowers fade. They look like bright green strings of pearls hanging in the tree.
- In the fall the dark green leaves drop off, but many fruits hang on through the winter.
- For the people of China the scholar tree is a symbol of luck, happiness, and kindness.
- It is a member of the legume family, just like peas and beans.

Visit some of the scholar trees (✱✱) in the Arboretum.