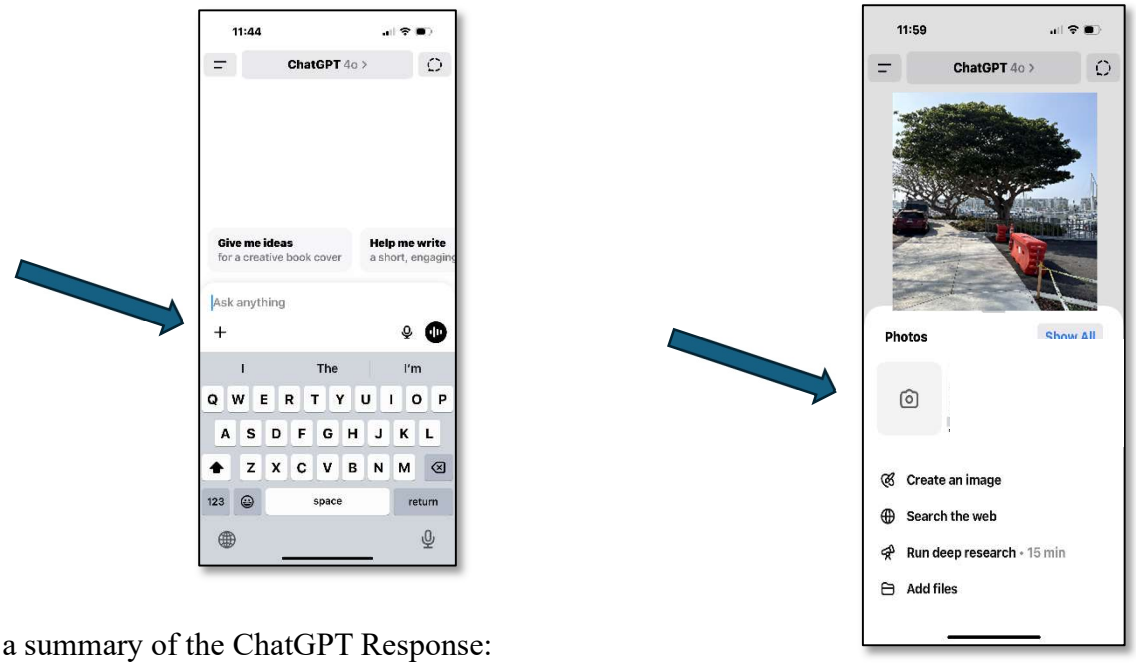
Phone Photo – Mystery Tree

Move over, Google, today, ChatGPT took the lead on my nature walk!

I love to take long walks and I often feel curious about the world around me. Before, I would take a nature photo and then look up information using a nature app or Google. Today, I chose to test ChatGPT, and it did not disappoint. Walking through the Marina, I noticed an interesting tree. I opened the ChatGPT app, tapped the "+' button to upload a photo, and quickly received my answer.

After I pressed the +, the camera was available and all I had to do was Point and Shoot!



This is a summary of the ChatGPT Response:

The tree in the photo is a Moreton Bay Fig (Ficus macrophylla), a large, spreading tree native to Australia and commonly found in coastal California. Known for its thick, twisting trunks and broad canopy, it provides excellent shade and dramatic visual impact. These trees grow slowly and can live well over 100 years. Based on its size, this particular tree is likely between 40 and 80 years old. A famous example of this species was planted in Santa Barbara in 1876 and is now one of the largest fig trees in the U.S., symbolizing strength, endurance, and natural beauty.

Here is a brief tutorial on how to take advantage of ChatGPT's picture-taking feature regarding my nature scene.

🔍 **Step 1: Take a clear photo.** These photos will be saved in your photo album and can be imported into ChatGPT.
• Capture the entire tree, including the canopy, trunk, and surroundings.
• Make sure it's well-lit and in focus**.**

- Tip: If possible, also take close-ups of leaves, bark, or fruit.

📷 **Step 2: Upload the Photo to ChatGPT**

- Start here, if you subscribe to the ChatGPT plan with image input, such as ChatGPT Plus.
- Upload the photo into the chat.
- Type a prompt like:

"Can you help me identify this tree?"

🤷 **Step 3: ChatGPT will analyze**

- Tree shape (rounded, spreading, columnar)
- Leaf density and texture (broadleaf vs needle, glossy vs matte)
- Bark texture and color
- Surroundings (urban vs coastal clues)
- Environmental hints (marina, buildings, region, etc.)

🪴 **Step 4: ChatGPT's Answer**

The tree has a thick trunk, a large, rounded canopy, and is located near a marina. It resembles a **Ficus Macrocarpa** (Indian Laurel Fig), a common shade tree in Southern California coastal areas.

🧰 **Step 5: Ask Follow-Up Questions**

- "Is this tree native to this area?"
- "Is it drought tolerant?"
- "Does it drop a lot of leaves or fruit?"
- "Is it good for shade in small yards?"

🤦 **Bonus Tips**

- For better accuracy, pair ChatGPT with a plant ID app.
- Use tree identification for learning, journaling, or teaching kids.
- Remember: ChatGPT gives educated guesses, not botanical confirmation.