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*Manilkara bidentata*

[Synonyms : *Achras balata*, *Mimusops balata*, *Mimusops bidentata*, *Mimusops globosa*, *Mimusops surinamensis*, *Sapota mulleri*]

**BALATA TREE** is an evergreen tree. Native to tropical America (particularly Guyana and Trinidad) it has small fragrant flowers.

It is also known as *Ausubo* (Dominican, Puerto Rican), *Balata*, *Balata rouge* (French Guianese), *Balato* (Esperanto), *Beefwood*, *Bolletri* (Surinamese), *Bullet*, *Bulletwood*, *Bully*, *Chicozapote* (Mexican), *Macaranduba* (Brazilian), *Nispero* (Panamanian), *Purgio*, and *Quinilla*.

The wood is a source of commercial gutta- percha (balata) a non-elastic latex tapped from these trees.

*Bidentata* is derived from Latin *bi-* (two) and *denti-* (tooth) components.

The latex can be used as a substitute for chicle (sapodilla, *Manilkara zapota*) in the manufacture of chewing gum. It also contributes to a high quality coating for golf balls and is employed in the manufacture of boot soles and machine belts.

The hard and heavy, dark red wood has had a wide range of uses from turning and heavy construction-work, boat-building and flooring to being used for making textile and pulp mill equipment, as well as railway sleepers, tool handles, parts for furniture, violin bows and billiard cues.