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Pachira quinata

[Synonyms : *Bombacopsis fendleri*, *Bombacopsis jaris*, *Bombacopsis quinata*, *Bombacopsis sepium*, *Bombax fendleri*, *Bombax quinatum*, *Pachira fendleri*, *Pochota quinata*, *Pochota vulgaris*]

POCHOTE is a deciduous tree. Native to Central America and north-eastern South America (Nicaragua to Colombia) it has brown-beneath, white flowers with many long stamens. It is also known as *Cedro espino* (Honduran and Nicaraguan), *Ceiba tolua* (Colombian), and *Saquisaqui* (Venezuelan).

The pale pink or pinkish-brown heartwood turns light to dark reddish-brown upon exposure to air.

The seeds are dispersed by wind.

Quinata is derived from Latin *quinque* (five) meaning ‘in fives, divided into five parts or with parts in fives’ with reference to the leaflets.

Locally the wood has been used for veneering, manufacturing plywood and board, and the production of paper pulp. It has also been used for general construction and building interiors, and for making furniture. This wood has provided a valuable export commodity for several countries including Colombia and Venezuela.

The tree is considered vulnerable in some native regions from over harvesting, and slash and burn with the encroachment of human habitation and clearance for agricultural land. At the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries however both its conservation in the wild and replanting programmes have begun to be addressed.