

Parinari excelsa

[Synonyms : *Ferolia amazonica*, *Ferolia excelsa*, *Parinari brachystachya*, *Parinari caillei*, *Parinari curatellifolia*, *Parinari elliotii*, *Parinari excelsa* var. *caillei*, *Parinari excelsa* var. *fulvescens*, *Parinari excelsa* subsp. *holstii*, *Parinari glaziovana*, *Parinari holstii*, *Parinari holstii* var. *longifolia*, *Parinari laxiflora*, *Parinari mildbraedii*, *Parinari nalaensis*, *Parinari riparia*, *Parinari salicifolia*, *Parinari sylvestris*, *Parinari tenuifolia*, *Parinari verdickii*, *Parinari whytei*, *Parinarium excelsa*, *Petrocarya excelsa*]

GUINEA PLUM is a tree. Native to tropical Africa and to Amazonia, it has many small, fragrant, silkily-hairy and greyish-white outside flowers.

It is also known as *Afam* (Ghanaian), *Andzili* (Ugandan), *Angili* (Ugandan), *Assila* (Cameroonian), *Bafo-de-boi-mirim* (Brazilian), *Esagko* (Nigerian), *Eshagho* (Nigerian), *Inyi* (Nigerian), *Kpar* (Liberian), *Mampata* (Senegalese), *Mobola plum*, *Mubura* (Tanzanian. Ugandan), *Munazi* (Ugandan), *Ofam* (Ghanaian), *Rough-skinned plum*, and *Sougue* (Ivorian).

In the early 1990s guinea plum was declared to be a vulnerable species in the wild.

Excelsa means ‘tall or high’.

Both the yellowish fruit pulp and the hard-shelled kernels have contributed to a part of local food in both Africa and Amazonia. The raw fruit have been eaten by the South American Panare Indians of Venezuela – and some authorities say that they were especially sought after by small boys. The small rough and pitted, glossy brownish to purplish fruit are also used locally to make both soft and fermented drinks. Some authorities note that the roasted oily kernel has been eaten in the African tropics when other food is scarce.

In Amazonia oil expressed from the fruit pulp has provided a hair perfume.

West Africans on the other hand have used the pulp and the fruit shell for dyeing – and in the Congo mixed bark and wood ash have provided an agent for curing skins.

The fruit seem to be particularly popular for wildlife on the South American and African Continents. Authorities have taken the trouble to note an exotic cross-section that eat and disperse the seeds – not least agoutis, bats, baboons, chimpanzees, elephants, fish, pacas, pigeons, tapirs and tortoises.

The South American Waimiri Atroari Indians made their arrowheads from the hard wood – and locally in Africa it has been used for building and has also been burnt as firewood. On a larger scale this pale brown to yellowish-red wood has been used for heavy construction work, and for making pit props and railway sleepers. It has also been used for joinery and for making furniture and household utensils.

Medicinally, the bark has been used in West Africa in infusion for treating fever and as part of dressings applied after ritual circumcision.