

*Quassia indica*

[Synonyms : *Locandia glandulifera*, *Locandia indica*, *Locandia madagascariensis*, *Locandia mekongensis*, *Locandia merguensis*, *Locandia pendula*, *Manungala pendula*, *Mauduita penduliflora*, *Niota commersonii*, *Niota lamarckiana*, *Niota lucida*, *Niota pentapetala*, *Niota tetrapetala*, *Samadera brevipedata*, *Samadera glandulifera*, *Samadera indica*, *Samadera indica* var. *brevipedata*, *Samadera indica* var. *papuana*, *Samadera lucida*, *Samadera madagascariensis*, *Samadera mekongensis*, *Samadera pentapetala*, *Samadera tetrapetala*, *Samandura indica*, *Samandura madagascariensis*, *Samandura mekongensis*, *Vitmannia elliptica*, *Vitmannia lucida*]

**NIEPA BARK TREE** is a deciduous tree. Native from Madagascar, Sri Lanka and India to Polynesia, it has dense flat-topped heads of tiny, white to pinkish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as Bitter wood, *Gucchakarañja* (Sanskrit), *Kariññoṭṭa* (Malayalam), *Lokhāntī* (Hindi), *Malunggal* (Tagalog), *Manunggal* (Filipino), *Nipam* (Tamil), and *Palo santo* (Spanish)

Warning : the bitter-tasting bark can be poisonous.

*Indica* means ‘of or from India or the East Indies or the Far East’.

Some Asian authorities have stated that the tree’s medicinal qualities are of the greatest importance in the region, followed by its value in the provision of vegetable oil, insecticide and a chewing medium.

A leaf decoction has been used locally in Indonesia for killing termites.

The handle of the Indonesian parang (equivalent of the more widely known machete) is quite often made from wood of the niepa bark tree.

Medicinally, Indonesians have taken a leaf decoction as an emetic and purgative, as well as employing it as a treatment for stomach upsets. They have also used the stems for some treatments too. The bitter-tasting bark has been an ingredient in India for easing fever and the leaves have been applied externally to heal some skin disorders, including neutralising itches. Then in the Philippines the bark or wood have been chosen in remedies for fevers, roasted and pounded seed has been applied to parts of the body experiencing rheumatic pain and bruised leaves have been made into a compress for healing skin eruptions. Parts of the Niepa bark tree have been used in Madagascar and the central African Republic of the Congo for treating malaria.