

*Syzygium cumini*

[Synonyms : *Calyptranthes oneillii*, *Eugenia cumini*, *Eugenia jambolanum*, *Eugenia jambos*, *Myrtus cumini*, *Syzygium jambolanum*, *Syzygium jambos*]

**JAMBUL** (English, German) is an evergreen tree. Native to India and south-eastern Asian islands (particularly the five small islands of the Moluccas) it has small fragrant, dirty-white turning pinkish flowers with many prominent lemon-white stamens.

It is also known as *Appelroos* (Dutch), Black berry, Black plum, Indian allspice, Indian blackberry, *Jam* (Bengali), *Jaman* (Hindi), Jambhool, *Jambhul* (Marathi), Jambol, Jambolan, *Jambolanapflaume* (German), Jambolan plum, *Jambolon* (Spanish), Jambos, *Jambu* (Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit), *Jamkuk* (Oriya), *Jamu* (Assamese), Jamum, *Jamun* (Hindi), Java plum, *Jiwat* (Malay), *Juwet* (Javanese), *Kalajam* (Bengali), *Ma-ha* (Thai), *Maha-dan* (Singhalese), Malabar plum, *Na-val* (Malayalam, Tamil), *Neredu* (Telugu), Plum rose, *Pomarrosa* (Spanish), *Pomme rose* (French), Portuguese plum, Rac apple, Rose apple, Rose plum, *Wa* (Thai), *Wachsjambuse* (German), and *Yavel* (Malayalam).

The leaves are distilled to produce a bright green oil.

*Cumini* is derived from Latin *cuminum* (cumin) with reference to the plant's scent.

The trees are popular in towns for their shade and appearance. Jambul is also grown as windbreaks and hedging.

This tree is revered by Buddhists and can often be found growing around Buddhist temples. Foliage and fruit are used by Hindus in the worship of Vinayaka or Ganesa, the elephant-headed god.

A high-quality honey is obtained from the flowers.

The ripe small glossy, yellowish-pink flushed, greenish or whitish fruit (that can be eaten raw or cooked with sugar) are not only used to make preserves, jams and jellies but also in southern India the unripe fruit juice is made into vinegar – and the ripe fruit provide an ingredient for a port-like wine. It is said that the flavour of the fruit can be improved by rubbing the bruised skin with salt and leaving it for one hour.

Leaves (and seeds) are used as animal fodder and they also provide food for a species for silkworm.

Locally the heavy, rough and durable, moderately hard, dull brown wood (which is also termite-resistant) is made into agricultural tools and is also used for general construction. It is made into railway sleepers too and is also burnt as fuel.

The bark has been used for tanning and dyeing. In the Philippines it was particularly applied to fishing nets.

Unfortunately jambul is no longer popular in Hawaii as since its introduction there it has become invasive.

Medicinally, the fresh seeds have been used in diabetic treatments, and powdered as an antidote for poisoning from nux-vomica (*Strychnos nux-vomica*). In India the bark and unripe fruit have provided a remedy for diarrhoea and dysentery.