

Terminalia catappa

[Synonyms : *Buceras catappa*, *Catappa domestica*, *Terminalia badamia* sensu, *Terminalia latifolia*, *Terminalia mauritania*, *Terminalia procera*, *Terminalia rubrigemnis*]

INDIAN ALMOND is a deciduous or evergreen tree. Native to the Malaysia it has small greenish-white flowers and (unusually for the tropics) leaves that turn red or yellow before dropping.

It is also known as *Almendra* (Spanish), *Almendro*, *Almond tree*, *Amandier des Indes* (French), *Badamier du Malabar* (French), *Badan* (Burmese), *Barbados almond*, *Beach almond*, *Bengal nut*, *Broad leaf tree*, *Coastal almond*, *Country almond*, *Desi badam* (Gujarati), *False kamani*, *Fijian nut*, *Hu kwang* (Thai), *Indian silver grey wood*, *Indischer Mandelbaum* (German), *Katapang* (Sundanese), *Ketapang* (Javanese, Malay), *Kotamba* (Sinhalese), *Kottai* (Tamil), *Malabar almond*, *Manguel* (Dutch), *Myrobalan*, *Nat vadam* (Tamil), *Olive bark tree*, *Safed chuglam* (Hindi), *Sea almond*, *Singapore almond*, *Singapore nut*, *Talie* (Samoan), *Tavola* (Fijian), *Telie* (Tongan), *Tropical almond*, *West Indian almond*, *White Bombay*, *White chuglam*, *Wild almond*, and *Zanman'n* (Creole).

The small hard-husked, greenish-yellow fruit are distributed by the sea.

An oil can be extracted from the seeds.

Catappa is derived from a Malayan name for this species.

Roots, bark, leaves and unripe fruit have been employed in tanning.

The fruit, which yield a black dye or ink base, have long been used in eastern India to stain teeth. The wood chips are also soaked in water to obtain a yellow solution.

Leaves have provided food for silkworms.

The seed oil has similar uses to almond oil (*Prunus dulcis* var. *dulcis*) eg. pharmaceutical flavouring, cooking and salad oils, and the seeds themselves can be eaten raw or roasted. (The latter tend to be eaten locally by children in times of plenty and by young and old when food is scarce.)

Indian almond (which is often squat in appearance as it grows far wider than its height from the ground) is invariably planted in the tropics as a shade and street tree. It can also be grown to prevent erosion as its root system provides sand binding qualities.

Its hard and durable, pale to reddish-brown wood is also strong, elastic and moderately heavy.

Apart from its use locally as fuel it has been used for veneering and to make furniture. It has also been employed for general construction and for boatbuilding, bridges, flooring and making crates.

Medicinally, the bark has been used locally to treat dysentery and the leaf juice has been taken as a remedy for headaches and wind.