

LOCAL NAMES

English (bastard mahogany,African mammey apple,African apricot,African apple); Spanish (mamey)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Mammea africana is a fairly common large forest tree reaching heights of 40 m or more and 1 m in trunk diameter.

Leaves dark green, glossy, oblong, 32 cm x 9 cm. Young leaves copper-red when they emerge, but darken on maturity.

Fruits large and round, normally 10-12cm in diameter. Outer skin rough and leathery, light brown in color. Inside is a fibrous white/yellow flesh that is consumed. This mushy flesh surrounds 1-2 large seeds approximately 6-8 cm in size.

The generic name is from a West Indian name, 'mammey' for a member of the genus. The specific epithet means 'of African origin'.

BIOLOGY

M. africana is a heavy fruit bearer, fruiting from March to June in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

Soil type: It does well in the fertile forest soils, where moisture is in abundance. They also do well in clay and sandy soils.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia

Exotic:



The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

PRODUCTS

Food: Its fruits are edible. When they soften, the fruits are sliced open and the flesh consumed, leaving the seed(s) and the skin. It has a good flavour, but sometimes quite acidic. Some trees produce sweet, less acidic fruit, while others, sour, acidic fruits.

Timber: *M. africana* is one of the timber species exported from Ghana. It is used for construction, furniture, exterior joinery, carpentry work and railway sleepers.

Medicine: The resinous sap, or a lotion made from its roots, is used in West Africa for any pruriginous skin disease (craw-craw) and parasitic skin diseases. The bark shavings are used as rubbings for skin eruptions and for itch in dogs; a bark decoction is used for rheumatic pains and to clear ulcers; and a thick paste of pulped fruits, mixed with root and bark infusion, is painted on itch and other skin afflictions and allowed to dry.

SERVICES

Ornamental: The tree's branching habit and overall form is quite ornamental and would look handsome as a yard tree.

TREE MANAGEMENT

Due to their large sizes at maturity, a spacing of 8 m between trees is recommended. *M. africana* is shade-tolerant, but as it grows older, shading should be removed gradually. Initial organic mulching around the base of the tree extending as far out as the branches can reach is beneficial.

FURTHER READING

Kunkel G. 1965. The trees of Liberia: German Forestry Commission to Liberia Report No.3. BLV.

Roy MD and Paul DN. 1994. Zaire Native fruits: twenty of the best nuts found in the rainforest and savanna areas of northwest Zaire. Imeloko Agroforestry Program, Chicago, USA.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Orwa C, A Mutua, Kindt R, Jamnadass R, S Anthony. 2009 Agroforestry Database: a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0 (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/sites/treedbs/treedatabases.asp>)