

LOCAL NAMES

English (Reticulated Leaf-flower)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Phyllanthus reticulatus is a monoecious scandent shrub or small bushy tree, up to 5 m tall (in Africa rarely up to 18 m tall); trunk up to 15 cm in diameter, bark rough, brown to grey, branchlets slender.

Leaves differently shaped; spirally arranged scale-like, ca. 1.5 mm long on the orthotropic shoots; plagiotropic shoots with normally developed, distichous, elliptic to (ob)ovate leaves, 1-3(-5) cm x 0.5-2(-2.5) cm, entire, cuneate to rounded at base, obtuse to emarginate at apex, glabrous and shortly petiolate.

Flowers in few-flowered fascicles or solitary in leaf axils, unisexual, often a single female flower and some male flowers together, sometimes arranged on leafless shoots and those then seemingly long racemes, with 5(-6) perianth lobes and 5(-6) disk glands; male flowers with 5(-6) stamens; female flowers with a superior subglobose ovary, crowned by 2-lobed styles.

Fruit a depressed-globose berry, up to 7 mm in diameter, usually blueish-black when ripe with dark purplish pulp, 6-many-seeded.

Seeds trigonous up to 2 mm long, blackish.

The indumentum of leaves, stem and flowers is variable, from glabrous to densely pubescent.

In Africa, 2 varieties have been distinguished: var. *reticulatus* with pubescent flowering shoots and sometimes also leaves and stems, and var. *glaber* (Thwaites) Muell. Arg. with all parts glabrous.

BIOLOGY

P. reticulatus generally flowers throughout the year.

ECOLOGY

P. reticulatus frequently grows along watercourses, but also in scrub and hedges, on waste places, and in mixed evergreen forest. It is found in India and Taiwan up to 2000 m altitude. This species is often common in moist places.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

Altitude: 800-2 000 m

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: China, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka

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

Timber: The wood is hard and tough, and greyish-white to reddish. The wood is sometimes used to make utensils.

Tannin or dyestuff: A black ink is prepared in the Philippines from the ripe fruits. In Indonesia a decoction of stem and leaves was used for dyeing cotton black. It is also used as a mordant. In India the root is reported to produce a red dye.

Medicine: *P. reticulatus* has numerous medicinal uses. Roots, bark, leaves, as well as fruits are used for a large number of complaints, notably to treat asthma and coughs, and for injuries of the skin.

SERVICES

TREE MANAGEMENT

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT

PESTS AND DISEASES

FURTHER READNG

Brandis D. 1978. Indian trees: An account of trees, shrubs, woody climbers, bamboos and palms indigenous or commonly cultivated in the British India empire. London. 767pp.

Burkill IH. 1966. A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay Peninsula. Revised reprint. 2 volumes. Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Vol. 1 (A-H) pp. 1-1240. Vol. 2 (I-Z) pp. 1241-2444.

Chen SH & Wu MJ. 1997. A revision of the herbaceous *Phyllanthus* L. (Euphorbiaceae) in Taiwan. *Taiwania* 42: 239–261.

Coates-Palgrave K. 1988. Trees of southern Africa. C.S. Struik Publishers Cape Town.

Phuphathanaphong L.1992. *Phyllanthus reticulatus* Poiret. In Lemmens, R.H.M.J. & Wulijarni-Soetjipto, N. (Eds.): Plant Resources of South-East Asia. No. 3: Dye and tannin-producing plants. Prosea Foundation, Bogor, Indonesia. pp. 109-110.

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>)