Funtumia africana (Benth.) Stapf

Apocynaceae

LOCAL NAMES
English (male funtum,Lagos rubber,bush rubber,bastard wild rubber)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Funtumia africana is a tropical tree up to 30 m tall (usually shorter) with a straight, cylindrical trunk and a narrow tree crown. Bark brown to dark in colour, thin and slightly fissured becoming granular on old trees. Slash orange exuding latex copiously.

Leaves elliptic or ovate, base round or cuneate, apex acuminate 20 x 9 cm, with approximately 8-14 main lateral veins on each side, leaf margins wavy. Axils on the main lateral veins not pitted.

Flowers yellow-white, fragrant in dense cymes. Corolla tube 6-10 mm, lobes 5-7mm.

Fruit grey-brown, fusiform, with an acute or acuminate apex, up to 30 cm long, with hairy wind borne seeds.

Funtumia africana and F. elastica are very similar morphologically and distribution wise, when F. elastica latex is rubbed between the fingers the latex coagulates into balls, whereas F. africana does not. The generic epithet is derived from ‘funtum’, a local Ghanaian (Akan dialect) name of the plant. The specific epithet means 'of Africa'.

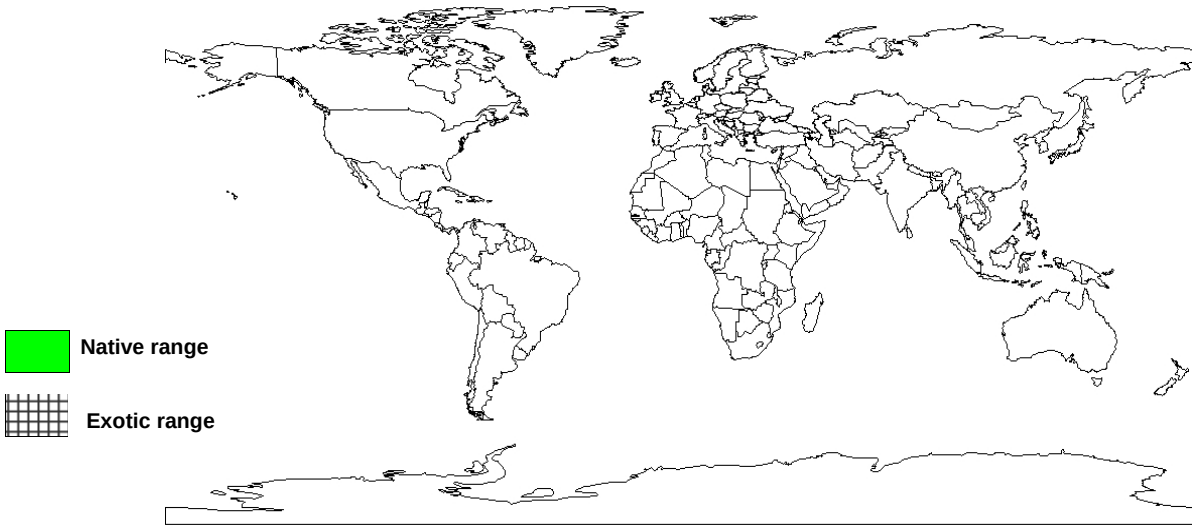
BIOLOGY
Flowers insect pollinated.

ECOLOGY
A forest tree commonly composing the second storey in rainforests, F. africana is commonly associated with Elaeis guineensis, Kolobopetalum chevalieri, Dioscorea preusii, Cnestis hirsutus, Tabernaemontana crassa and Alstonia congensis, this association is the Tabernaemontano-Elaeetum guineensis typicum. Bastard wild rubber is also common in forest regrowth.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Angola, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda

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
Apiculture: The fragrant yellow-white flowers are visited by bees for nectar and pollen.

Fuel: Branches and trunk can be used as fuelwood.

Timber: F. africana wood is white, even textured with a weight of 64 kg/m^3. air dry. It is used for cheap joinery, furniture and matchstick manufacture. The wood is also reportedly used for carving stools, doors and miscellaneous household requirements.

Gum or resin: In Kenya, F. africana latex is used as birdlime.

Latex or rubber: F. africana latex polyisoprenes are useless as a source of rubber, Use of bastard wild rubber latex as an adulterant, leads to imperfect coagulation and consequently a valueless rubber.

Medicine: In Africa this species is used to treat urinary incontinence and burns. The leaf and bark are used as enema. The principle alkaloids of F. africana, funtumine and funtumidine are hypotensive.

Poison: The latex is a weak ingredient and adherent for poisoned arrows.

Other products: Conanine-type alkaloids were isolated from the stem bark (collected in Nigeria), some are identical with holonamine isolated from the stem bark of Holarrhena antidysenterica. The extracts induced a dose-related bradycardia in rats and, in vitro, in guinea pig auricles. The seed floss is used to stuff pillows in Ghana.

SERVICES
Erosion control: The root system of F. africana protects moist forest soil from erosion.

Shade or shelter: The tree casts a heavy, cool shade.

Soil improver: Leaf litter improves soil fertility of surrounding soil.

FURTHER READNG

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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