

India, Burma

Common names: **English:** Sirns tree, woman's tongue.

Ecology: The tree has been widely introduced into all other tropical regions, becoming naturalized in many, and much of the subtropical zone. Plantations have been established in South East Asia, South America, the Caribbean and North and West Africa. Although it prefers black cotton soil, as the roots are near the surface and require a high watertable, it will grow on a wide range of soils, acid, alkaline and saline, 900-1,500 m. In Uganda it is grown around the salt lakes in Kasese District.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture), flooring, poles, posts, medicine (flowers, bark, seed), fodder (leaves, flowers, pods), bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, gum, soap (bark).

Description: Usually a deciduous tree 8-14 m, but may reach 25 m. The trunk is often short, crown spreading and fairly dense. **BARK:** grey-violet with rusty brown breathing pores, rough and fissured. **LEAVES:** bipinnate **feathery** with 3-11 pairs of leaflets, tip rounded, usually 2-3 cm. **FLOWERS:** numerous **cream-yellow-pink, half spherical**, about 2-5 cm across, stalked, lasting only a few days; filaments greenish-yellow, white below; each flower with a small stalk. **FRUIT:** **shiny yellow-brown pods in clusters**, decorate the tree a long time, **each pod 20-30 cm long**, bulging over a few seeds, the seeds and pods "chatter" in the wind.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing at site, cuttings, root suckers.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: 7,000-12,000. Seed collection is done from the tree or on the ground and seeds are completely dried. Germination is good.

treatment: nicking improves germination; alternatively immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 12 hours.

storage: seed can be stored for a long time if kept dry and insect free.

Management: Fast growing on good sites; lopping, pollarding, coppicing, pruning. Protect from browsing animals.

Remarks: Hard and heavy wood which has a good grain suitable for furniture. As in most Albizia, saponin in the bark can be used as soap. As it is shallow rooted and not particularly wind firm it should not be planted near houses.

