

S.E. Asia

Common names: **English:** Carambola, star fruit.

Ecology: A small fruit tree now widely cultivated in the wetter tropics from West Africa to Florida and Queensland. A recent import to Europe where its decorative star fruit is valued. It is cultivated in some Uganda gardens. *A. bilimbi* is a similar tree.

Uses: Fruit (drink, jelly), detergent (juice).

Description: A small tree but up to 7-10 m with dense branching to an upright rounded crown. LEAVES: pinnate with **5-11 pairs of pale green leaflets**, each oval about 15 cm, **folding up when touched**. FLOWERS: white or **mauve** in little cluster which **grow out of the main trunk, and woody branches** all over the tree. FRUIT: oblong and fleshy, about 10 cm long, strongly 5-angled (star-shaped when cut), yellow-orange and crisp when ripe. They look like wax the watery pulp acid sweet tasting something between apricot and passion fruit.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), root suckers or direct sowing on site.

Seed: Extracted by crushing the fruit and hand picking the seeds. Seed can be obtained from Entebbe Botanical Gardens and Kampala city gardens.

treatment:

storage: sow as quickly as possible.

Management: A mix of cultivars should be planted for cross pollination. Pruning is recommended and thinning of excess fruit in the early stage. Fast growing.

Remarks: Fruits are acidic but can be made into a pleasant drink or jelly. The juice removes stains from linen. Makes a handsome ornamental, so plant as a border or avenue tree. The timber is also useful.

