

Azadirachta indica

Meliaceae

N.E. India, Burma

Trade name: Neem.

Common names: **English:** Neem.

Ecology: A well-known tree in its natural range (India) and today widely planted in Africa. Pan-tropical in semi-arid and arid regions, withstanding drought. In Uganda it grows very well in lowland areas of Moroto, Kotido, Soroti, Kumi and Mbale Districts. Roots grow deep and spread over a wide area; does not stand waterlogging.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, poles, medicine (bark), fodder (leaves, oil-seed cake), bee forage, soil conservation, ornamental, shade, windbreak, insecticide (azadirachtin in leaves, etc.), oil (seeds), soap (seed oil).

Description: A fast-growing, medium-sized tree which may reach 20 m, with a **dense, leafy, oval-shaped canopy, evergreen**. **BARK:** pale grey-brown, grooved and rough at maturity. **LEAVES:** glossy green, crowded at the ends of branches, **pinnate to 40 cm long, each leaflet curved and long pointed, the edge roughly saw toothed**, leaf blades unequal, **a small leaflet at the leaf tip**. **FLOWERS:** small, fragrant, creamy white, hanging in long graceful sprays. **FRUIT:** **oval yellow berries when ripe, 2 cm long, thin skinned with oily pulp** around 1-2 seeds.

Propagation: Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), wildings, stumps, direct sowing at site.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 5,000.

treatment: not necessary; sow seed immediately after collection and extraction.

storage: seed can be stored only for a very short period under field conditions. Use fresh seed for best result.

Management: Fast growing; lopping, pollarding.

Remarks: The wood is tough and resistant to decay and termites. Highly valued for its medicinal uses. The tree spreads easily and may become a weed in some areas. In Ethiopia, leaf powder mixed with water has been used as an effective fumigant against seed borers in grain stores. Around Moroto the Karamojong debark avenue trees to use the bark for treatment of malaria. Farmers in Uganda claim that the neem's root system keeps termites away from the soil around it.

