

Cedrella odorata

Meliaceae

South America, West Indies

Common names: **English:** American cedar, Brazilian mahogany, cedrella, cigar-box tree, Spanish cedar.

Ecology: There are 9 species of American Cedrella, a subgroup of the commercial mahoganies. The Latin name means the "fragrant little cedar" and the aromatic chemical is a strong insect repellent. This tree is the most important timber for construction in tropical America. In Uganda it grows well in the warm and hot moist climates around Lake Victoria zone and in Western Region near Fort Portal.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber, shade, ornamental (avenue tree).

Description: An upright usually evergreen tree 20-35 m with a rounded crown which may have a large bole and slight buttresses in mature specimens. **The bitter garlic-onion smell in wood, bark, crushed flowers and leaves is characteristic.** **BARK:** grey-brown, becoming thick, rough and furrowed, inner bark light brown-pink. Twigs have raised lenticel dots and large, rounded leaf scars. **LEAVES:** **pinnate, compound to 60 cm long with 10-22 pairs stalked leaflets, long oval, each with long pointed tips and a one-sided rounded base,** to a thin stalk, 10-15 cm long, shiny above. **FLOWERS:** in large **loose terminal sprays** to 30 cm, each flower yellow-green, the calyx cup-like, very small, all parts in fives. **FRUIT:** **leathery brown capsules to 3.5 cm, rounded both ends,** dotted with paler lenticel dots, hanging on the tree, opening into 5 sections to release very many **tiny seeds, winged at one end.**

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings.

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: over 39,000. A canvas mat placed below the mother tree will catch the falling seed from the many capsules as they are blown by the wind,

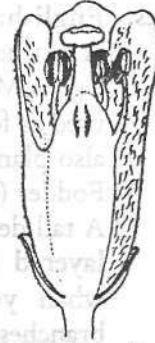
treatment: not necessary.

storage: easily attacked by insects. Seeds can be stored in a dry cool place, but better still sow seeds fresh. Add ash to reduce insect damage.

Management: Fast growing. Pruning is not required when grown as a stand but early weeding is essential. Shade and avenue trees have many low branches and spreading crowns.

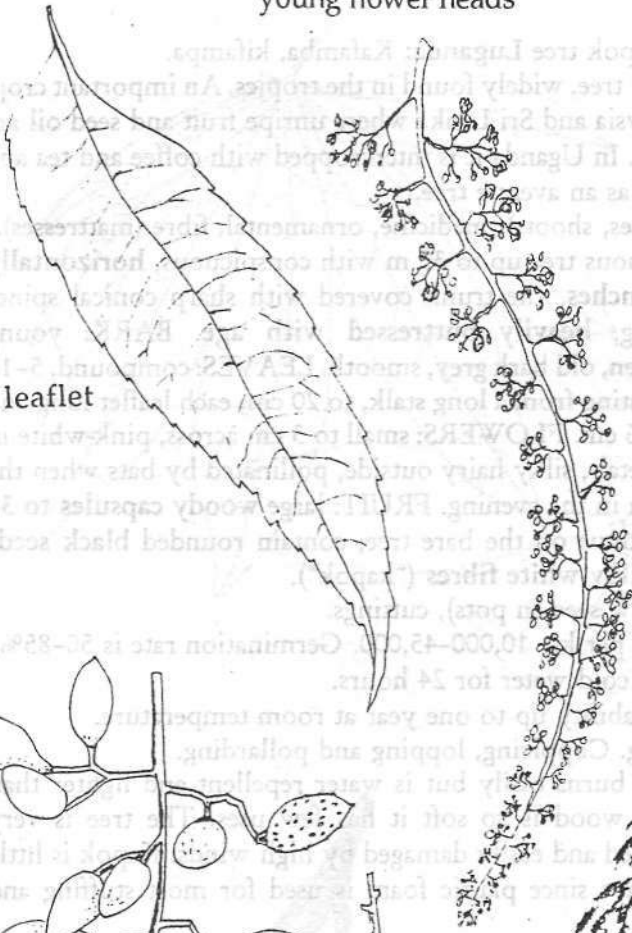
Remarks: A tree planted in Uganda in 1933 was 35 m tall by 1953, a growth rate of 1.75 m per annum: It has a mahogany-like timber which is durable, insect resistant, strong, easily worked and takes a smooth polish. The sapwood is pale brown and the heartwood light brown to red-brown with prominent growth rings.

young flower heads

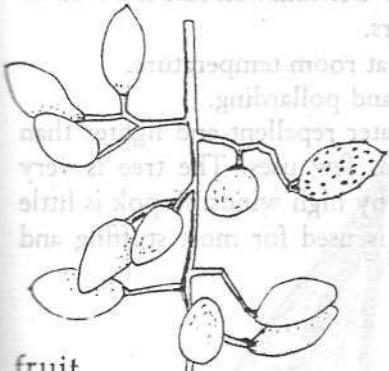


half male flower

much enlarged



leaflet



fruit capsules



seed

