

Cinnamomum zeylanicum

Lauraceae

Ceylon, India

Trade name: Cinnamon, Ceylon cinnamon.

Common names: **English:** Cinnamon **Luganda:** Budalasini.

Ecology: Native to tropical Asia, the camphor laurels are very fragrant in all parts and also decorative trees. Out of some 250 species, *Cinnamomum camphora* is the most widely grown in Asia. The bark of Ceylon cinnamon is the main source of the commercial spice. The leaves break down only very slowly so do not make good compost. The tree is widely cultivated in the wetter parts of East Africa but requires 1,500 mm rainfall and low altitude for profitable cultivation. It grows well in the Central Region of Uganda.

Uses: Firewood, seasoning (spice from bark, leaves used to flavour tea), ornamental.

Description: An evergreen shrub or tree reaching 6-10 m with very many leafy branches. **BARK:** young branchlets shiny orange-pink becoming brown and aromatic, rather smooth. **LEAVES:** leathery and wavy, oval, 10-15 cm long, **very shiny above with 3 main veins, pink-red when young**, leaf stalks, which reach 3 cm, also pink-red when young. Crushed leaves very aromatic. **FLOWERS:** sprays of tiny yellow-green flowers on cream stems, with an unpleasant fetid smell. **FRUIT: oval, green then blue-black and fleshy around 1 large seed, to 1.5 cm, held in a cup-like calyx.**

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings or direct sowing on site.

Seed: Collect fruits either from the tree or from the ground, dry and sow in seed beds or directly on site,

treatment: not necessary,

storage: store in a dry cool place.

Management: Lopping, pollarding.

Remarks: Can be planted as a back-yard tree or intercropped with banana or coffee. It can also be grown as an ornamental. The dry leaves and bark are common in Uganda markets and used to flavour food and drink. The bark is normally powdered for the spice of commerce and oil of cinnamon is distilled from leaves and bark. The smell of the oils escaping from the leaves is attractive to butterflies. Camphor woods in general are pale, light and insect repellent so favoured for use in clothes' chests.

