

Cordia sebestena

Boraginaceae

Caribbean region, Cuba

- Common names: Eng: aloe wood, geiger tree, scarlet cordia.
- Ecology: A decorative tree planted in many parts of the tropics where the climate is similar to that of the West Indies. Widely planted as a garden and avenue tree in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere at the coast. Best grown in sandy loams, but will also grow in poor sands.
- Uses: Ornamental, shade.
- Description: An evergreen shrub or small tree, but can reach 10 m, with brilliant orange-red flowers. BARK: dark brown to black, rough, fissured and fibrous. LEAVES: alternate, large; broadly oval to 20 cm long, thick, rough and hairy, tip pointed. FLOWERS: showy, orange-red, funnel shaped, 1.5 to 3.5 cm across with 5 or 8 rounded petals, in terminal clusters. FRUIT: white berries with sweet, sticky flesh.
- Propagation: Direct sowing, seedlings, cuttings.
- Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 1,000-1,300. Germination is good and uniform.
- treatment: not necessary.
- storage: seed can be stored for up to six months.
- Management: Fast growing; grows easily from seed or cuttings.
- Remarks: Normally resistant to termites. A good avenue tree. The sticky berries have been used as cough sweets. The timber is suitable for furniture. The rough leaves have been used as a sandpaper substitute.

