

Dalbergia sissoo

Fabaceae

India, S.E. Asia

Eng: *Sissoo*

Ecology

Cultivated in Shoa. Grows in high-rainfall areas, tolerating a variety of soils. It performs well in Moist and Wet Kolla agroclimatic zones, 700–1,600 m; can also grow at lower altitudes provided there is ground water. In India, it grows up to 300m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction, furniture), poles, posts, tool handles, carvings, fodder (pods, leaves), bee forage, shade, ornamental, nitrogen fixation, soil conservation, soil improvement, windbreak, oil (seeds), tannin (bark).

Description

A medium to large tree, 10–15 m in dry areas but up to 30 m on good sites, with a light crown, the bole often crooked. LEAVES: Compound, about 5 leaflets alternate on a stalk to 15 cm, each leaflet widest at the base, to 6 cm long with a fine pointed tip, clear veins raised above, on a flexible 0.5 cm stalk. FLOWERS: In dense clusters on stalks to 10 cm, pink-white, “pea-flower” shaped. FRUIT: Very many oblong pods, flat, thin and papery, to 7 cm, pale brown when dry, the 1–3 seeds visible within.

Propagation

Seedlings, direct sowing at site, stump cuttings prepared by cutting the shoot at

5–10 cm height and a 10 cm long portion of the root from bare root cuttings. These stumps can be planted with good results. This is the common method used in India and Nepal.

Seed

Germination rate $\pm 70\%$. About 55,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Not necessary to extract seeds from the pod. Break pod and soak in cold water for 48 hours.

Storage: Can be stored for up to a year if kept free from insects.

Management

Lopping, pollarding and coppicing. Produces root suckers. Thorough weeding is necessary for saplings.

Remarks

Fresh leaves may cause digestive disorders when fed to livestock during the dry season. This problem is eliminated if leaves are converted into silage. A taproot develops quickly in the seedling and will penetrate stony soils to the water table becoming deeply rooted. Long surface roots hold soil together and so help prevent erosion. The dark brown heartwood is a durable timber and makes excellent firewood and charcoal.



