

Ficus elastica

Moraceae

Malaysia, India

Common names: **English:** Indian rubber tree, rubber plant.

Ecology: This tree is a native of Malaysia and India. In Uganda it is mainly grown as an ornamental in gardens and often potted for indoor decoration.

Uses: Firewood, shade, ornamental (avenues).

Description: A large spreading evergreen tree to 30 m in its native rain forests. It may grow many aerial roots from the trunk and branches. **LEAVES:** large, oval and **shiny**, long, **abruptly pointed** with parallel side veins, rather **leathery** to 30 cm, on a yellow stalk to 6 cm. The **leaf bud is covered with a pink-red membrane**, usually 7 cm but as long as 30 cm on young plants. It falls away when the leaves unfold. **FIGS:** not often seen, yellow oblong about 1 cm, in pairs in the leaf axils.

Propagation: Air layering and cuttings.

Seed:

treatment:

storage:

Management: Fast growing. Pollarding.

Remarks: White latex, "India rubber", was extracted from the trunk and prop roots but the rubber is inferior to that from *Hevea brasiliensis*. It contains too much resin and can only be tapped every three months. Plant widely spaced.

