

Gmelina arborea

Vetbenaceae

South Asia

Common names: **Eng:** gmelina, white teak.

Ecology: Native to the lowlands of India, Burma and Sri Lanka. A useful tree planted worldwide, 0-1,200 m, but relatively new to Tanzania. It prefers hot, humid areas with fertile well-drained loams. Avoid dry poor sands. Its climatic range is moist plateau, wet tropical and dry plateau. In Tanzania the species has performed well in Rau forest, Moshi and Geita Districts.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture), veneer/plywood, poles, tools, fodder (leaves, fruit), bee forage, shade, ornamental, windbreak.

Description: A deciduous tree which may reach 26 m, usually much smaller, a fairly open crown, the base often multi-branched, **BARK:** Pale cream when young, grey-brown with age, corky, rough. **LEAVES:** large, **tip pointed, heart shaped, shiny above but pale and softly hairy below**, on stalks to 12 cm. **FLOWERS:** attractive **peach-yellow, bell shaped** abundant nectar attracts bees. **FRUIT:** **orange when ripe, 2.5 cm long** with 1-4 seeds inside. The fruity smell attracts bats.

Propagation: Seedlings, direct sowing, cuttings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 1,400. Germination 40-80% in 20-50 days.

treatment: not necessary but soak in cold water for 24 hours to improve germination.

storage: seed can be stored for a year before it starts to lose viability.

Management: Fast growing; pruning, lopping, coppicing.

Remarks: Protect young trees from livestock. Young trees do not compete well with weeds, but once established **compete** with crops and suppress undergrowth and thus should **not** be grown near cultivated land. The soft grey-white timber is light but strong.

