

Syzygium cuminii (S. jambolanum)

Myrtaceae

Asia

Common names: English: Jambolan, Java plum.

Ecology: A large tree, native to Burma, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, introduced to many other tropical countries and even into the sub-tropics, e. g. southern Australia and Florida. In Uganda it is grown as an avenue, compound or back-yard tree. In some areas it has become naturalized in secondary forests and scrub. Grows best in areas with rainfall over 1,000 mm annually and in well-drained soils, although it can tolerate waterlogging.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, timber (canoes), tools, food (fruit), pig feed (seeds), shade, ornamental (avenue tree), soil conservation, windbreak, tannin, dye.

Description: A large tree up to 30 m, though usually 15-18 m. The crown is well branched with dense, heavy foliage. **BARK:** dark and rough on the bole, smooth and paler on the younger branches. **LEAVES:** opposite large and oval to 20 cm, **smooth and shiny**, with a **distinct pointed tip, strongly aromatic if crushed**. Young leaves reddish. **FLOWERS:** green-white, about 1.5 cm across, in clusters below leaves. **Flower branchlets very symmetric**, at right angles. **FRUIT:** fleshy **purplish berry** about 2.5 cm long and up to 2 cm in diameter. Sweet, but the juice dries the mouth.

Propagation Very suitable for direct sowing on site, seedlings (sow seed in pots).

Seed: No. of seeds per kg: about 500. Germination takes 1-2 weeks and is very good with fresh seeds.

treatment: not necessary.

storage: seeds lose viability very soon. Use fresh seeds.

Management: Fairly fast growing. Pollarding, coppicing.

Remarks: In Uganda, jambolan has become one of the major cheap fruits and also an important tree for firewood production. Intercropping with banana, coffee and cocoa should be encouraged as well as planting single trees for shade and other uses.

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