

Tamarindus indica

Caesalpinioideae

Indigenous

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Ecology: A well-known tree indigenous to tropical Africa. It is a very adaptable species and drought-hardy, preferring semi-arid areas and wooded grasslands. It grows in most soils but does best in well-drained deep alluvial soil; often riverine in very dry areas. In Eritrea, it grows around Molki, Lesse gurja, Filfil, Solomuna, Ghinda, Dongolo, Keru, the Hazemo plains, Shambuko, Tokombia, Augaro and Adobha, 500-1,500 m.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, poles, **timber** (furniture, boats, general purposes), **food** (pulp for drink, fruit, spice), fodder (leaves, fruit), **medicine** (bark, leaves, roots, fruit), mulch, river-bank stabilization, ornamental, **shade**, windbreak, tannin (bark).

Description: A large tree to 30 m, with an **extensive dense crown**. The short bole can be 1 m in diameter. Evergreen or deciduous in dry areas. **BARK:** Rough, grey-brown, flaking. **LEAVES:** Compound, on hairy stalks to 15 cm, 10-18 pairs of leaflets, **dull green to 3 cm, oblong**, round at the tip and base, veins raised. **FLOWERS:** Small, in few-flowered heads, buds red, petals gold with red veins. **FRUIT:** Pale brown, **sausage-like**, hairy pods, cracking when mature to show **sticky brown pulp around 1-10 dark brown angular seeds**.

Propagation: Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing. No. of seeds per kg: $\pm 1,400$. Germination rate $\pm 90\%$. Soak seed in hot water or nick the seed. Seed can be stored for more than two years if kept in a dry, cool and insect-free place. Slow growing but long lived.

Management: Pollarding, coppicing.

Remarks: The dark brown heartwood is hard and heavy, well grained and easy to polish. The pulp is rich in vitamin C. It is recommended for homestead plantation and along stream banks and can be part of a live fence.

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