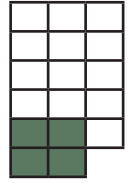


Tamarindus indica

Fabaceae



Indigenous

Am: *Humer, Roka*

Eng: *Tamarind*

Or: *Roka*

Sm: *Humer, Roqa*

Tg: *Humer*

Ecology

Indigenous to tropical Africa; widely used in the Sahel, India, South East Asia, the Caribbean and Central America. A very adaptable species, drought hardy, preferring semi-arid areas and wooded grasslands, tolerating salty, coastal winds, even monsoon climates. Grows in most soils, but prefers well-drained deep alluvial soil; often riverine in very dry areas. In Ethiopia, it occurs in Bereha and Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones of most regions, 0-1,500 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture, boats, general purposes), poles, food (fruit pulp for drink, fruit, spice), medicine (bark, leaves, roots, fruit), fodder (leaves, fruit), shade, ornamental, mulch, nitrogen fixation, 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 at site, grafting and budding for best varieties. Choose good mother trees for vegetative propagation.

Seed

350—1,400 seed per kg. Germination rate around 90%.

Treatment: Soak seed in cold water for 12 hours or nick the seed.

Storage: Seed can be stored for more than two years if kept in a dry, cool and insect-free place.

Management

Slow growing but long lived. Pollarding, coppicing.

Remarks

The dark brown heartwood is hard and heavy, well grained and easy to polish. The fruit pulp is rich in vitamin C. The fruit has many uses and important for nutrition in many parts of the world, including India. It is budded and grafted on a large scale in the Philippines. Recommended for homesteads.

