

# Tectona grandis

Verbenaceae

South-East Asia

**Common names:** **Eng:** teak; **Swan:** msaji.

**Ecology:** The natural range is wet tropical lowland forests of Burma, India, Thailand, and on the Indonesian islands. It grows in a variety of soils but deep soils with good drainage are necessary for satisfactory growth. Its climatic range is moist plateau and wet tropical. In Tanzania it is planted in large-scale plantations in Mtibwa (Morogoro), Longuza (Tanga) and in the Usambaras.

**Uses:** Firewood, timber (boat building, heavy construction, furniture), poles.

**Description:** A large deciduous tree over 30 m in height in favourable growing conditions. The bole is often buttressed and may be fluted to a considerable height, up to **15 m long below** the first branches, and up to 1 m in diameter at breast height. Crown open with many small branches. **BARK:** brown on the bole, distinctly fibrous and with shallow longitudinal fissures. **LEAVES:** **4-sided**, branchlets bear the **very large leaves** which are shed for 3-4 months during the later half of the dry season. Leaves shiny above, **hairy below**, vein network clear, about 30 x 20 cm but young leaves up to 1 m long. **FLOWERS:** small, about 8 mm across, **mauve-white** and arranged in **large flowering heads**, about 45 cm long, found on the topmost branches in the unshaded part of the crown. **FRUIT:** round, hard and woody, enclosed in an **inflated, bladder-like covering, pale green** at first, then brown after maturity.

**Propagation:** Stumps (12-18 months).

**Seed info.:** Germination is good and uniform after 5-6 weeks. No. of seeds per kg: 1,000-1,700.

**treatment:** alternate soaking in cold water and drying in sun for 2-3 days over a period of 2-3 weeks. A second method is to char (or half burn) the fruits by covering them with a thin layer of grass and setting this alight,

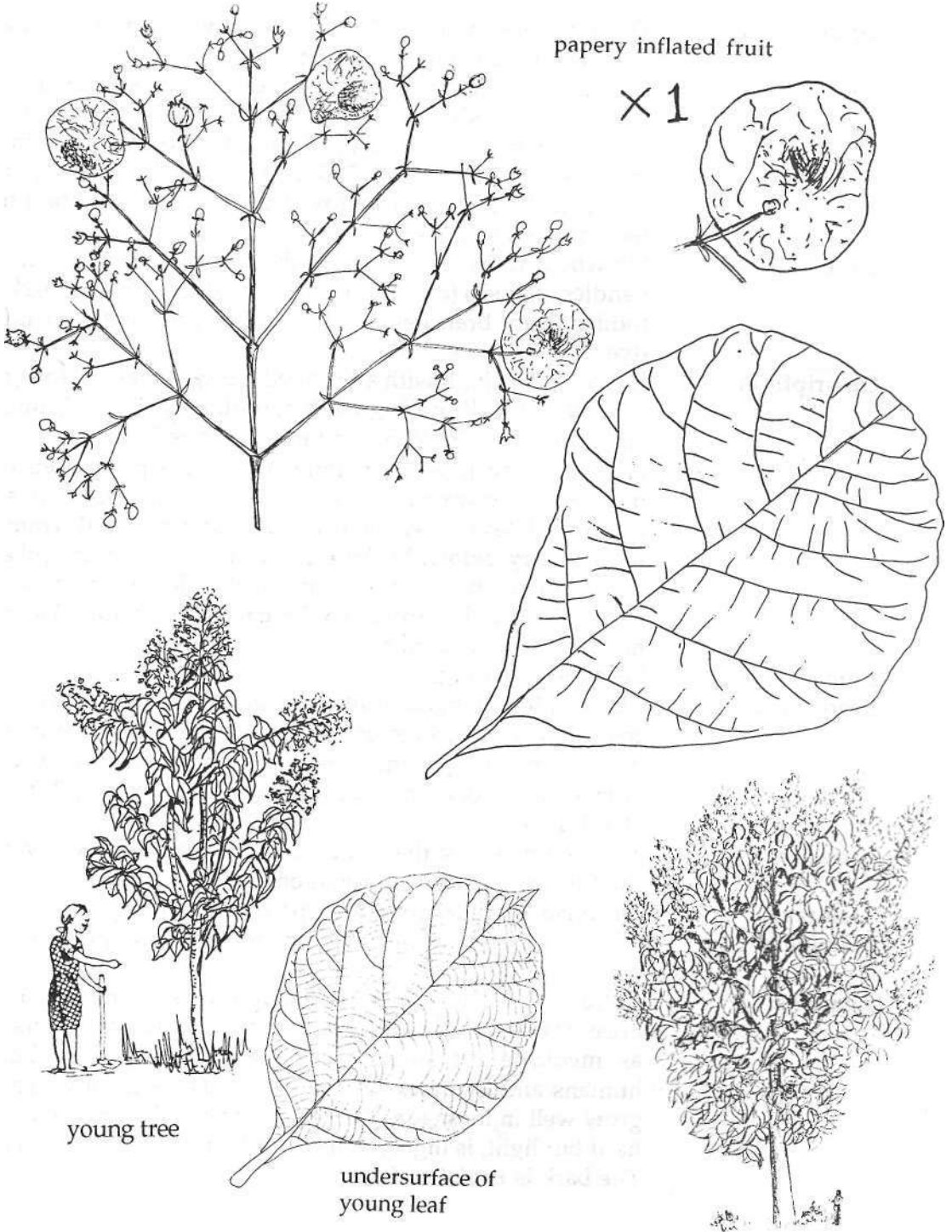
**storage:** seed can be stored for up to 3-4 years.

**Management:** Coppicing, thinning, weeding. Shoots can grow to 3 m in 2 years. Rotation period is 80 years.

**Remarks:** One of the most useful timbers in the world. Recommended as a timber tree in suitable sites in wetter areas below **1,200** m and for fuel and poles on the better soils in the moist plateau areas. Thinnings are useful timber also. Teak is heavier than water until dried out.

*Tectona grandis*

*Verbenaceae*



papery inflated fruit

$\times 1$

young tree

undersurface of young leaf