

Terminalia catappa

Combretaceae

Andaman Islands, India, tropical Asia, Malaysia

Common names: Eng: bastard almond, Indian almond, tropical almond;
Swah: mkungu.

Ecology: A conspicuous semi-deciduous tree of coastal areas throughout the warm tropics, including those of eastern Africa. In Tanzania, the Indian almond has been frequently planted near Lake Victoria and is used increasingly in the country's expanding urban areas as a shade tree.

Uses: Timber (boats), food (seed kernel), shade, ornamental, soil conservation, tannin (fruit shell), wrapping material (large leaves).

Description: A wide shady tree to 25 m with **clear horizontally layered branches** when young. Mature trees with a spreading crown. BARK: grey-brown, rough with age. LEAVES: very **large to 30 x 15 cm, leathery** and shiny, in clusters, bright red before **falling**, wider at the tip, veins very clear. FLOWERS: inconspicuous **green-white spikes**. FRUIT: hard, to 7 cm, green-red, **rounded and flattened with two ridges** but no wings.

Propagation: Seedlings.

Seed info.: No. of seeds per kg: 150-860. Germination is good but takes a long time—about 2 months.

treatment: soak seeds in cold water for 24 hours.

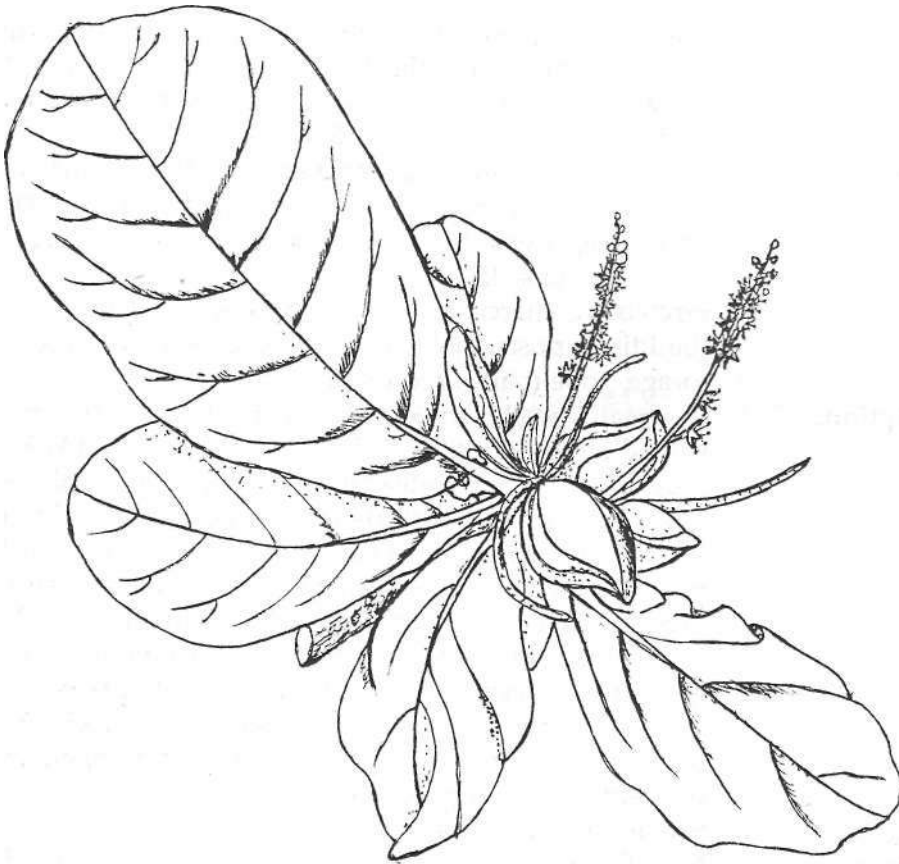
storage: can retain viability only for a few months.

Management: Medium to fast growing.

Remarks: Fruits float in sea water and the kernel contains an extractable oil. The kernels (rather like almond nuts of Europe) can be eaten raw or roasted and have an almond taste. The outer shell is rich in tannin. The red timber has been used to build boats. The tree's vast root system binds together both sand and poor soils.

Terminalia catappa

Combretaceae



young tree