

Syzygium jambos

Myrtaceae

Jambos



Jambos is an evergreen tree with a regular shaped, dense crown of wide-spreading branches, it can grow 6 - 10 metres tall. The bole can be 50cm in diameter, often branching from low down

A multipurpose tree that has been cultivated for around 2,500 years. It provides food, medicines and a range of commodities for the local population. An attractive tree with showy cream-coloured flowers and dark-green foliage, it is often grown as an ornamental and hedge plant in tropical gardens.

It is also sometimes cultivated for its edible fruit

The seeds are said to be poisonous

An unknown amount of hydrocyanic acid has been reported in the roots, stems and leaves

An alkaloid, jambosine, has been found in the bark of the tree and of the roots, and the roots are considered poisonous.

Edible Uses

Fruit - usually eaten raw, the fruit can also be stewed, made into jams, jellies, confections etc.

A sweet flavour with a crisp and crunchy texture, the fruit is somewhat to very juicy and has a delicate, rose-water fragrance.

When cooked with custards or puddings, they impart a rose-like flavour.

The large, hollow seed cavity is sometimes utilized to stuff the fruits and bake them .

The fruit has to be handled very carefully after harvesting because it bruises easily and then loses its crispness.

The fruit is up to 4cm x 6cm

Around the tropical world, the fruit is mostly eaten out-of-hand by children. It is seldom marketed. In the home, it is sometimes stewed with some sugar and served as dessert

The fruit can be distilled to yield a rosewater that is said to be equal to the best obtained from rose petals

Flowers - candied.



Medicinal

Several parts of the tree are used medicinally as a tonic or a diuretic

In India, the fruit is regarded as a tonic for the brain and liver. An infusion of the fruit acts as a diuretic.

A sweetened preparation of the flowers is believed to reduce fever.

The seeds are employed against diarrhoea, dysentery and catarrh.

In Nicaragua, it has been claimed that an infusion of roasted, powdered seeds is beneficial to diabetics. They say in Colombia that the seeds have an anaesthetic property.

The leaf decoction is applied to sore eyes, also serves as a diuretic and expectorant and treatment for rheumatism.

The juice of macerated leaves is taken as a febrifuge. Powdered leaves have been rubbed on the bodies of smallpox patients for the cooling effect.

The bark contains 7-12.4% tannin. It is astringent, emetic and cathartic.

The decoction is administered to relieve asthma, bronchitis and hoarseness.

Cuban people believe that the root is an effective remedy for epilepsy.



Other Uses

A yellow coloured essential oil, important in the perfume industry, is derived from the leaves by distillation.

It contains, among other properties, 26.84% dl-a-pinene and 23.84% l-limonene, and can be resorted to as a source of these elements for use in the perfume industry.

The bark contains 7% tannin on a dry weight basis and is used by local villagers for tanning and dyeing purposes.

The bark also yields a brown dye.

The flexible branches split easily. They are valued for making wattle, hoops for large sugar casks, and also are valued for weaving large baskets.

The heartwood is dark-red or brown; the sapwood is white. The wood is straight and close-grained, medium-heavy to heavy, strong. It is not durable in the ground and is prone to attack by dry wood termites.

It is usually too small for many purposes, but is commonly used for fenceposts, plant stakes etc, and larger pieces can be used to make furniture, spokes for wheels, arms for easy chairs, knees for all kinds of boats, beams for construction, frames for musical instruments (violins, guitars, etc.), and packing cases. It is also popular for general turnery.

The wood makes an excellent fuel and charcoal.

