

Spondias mombin

Spondias mombin or *Spondias purpurea* var. *lutea*, is a tree, a species of flowering plant in the family Anacardiaceae. It is native to the tropical Americas, including the West Indies. The tree has been naturalized in parts of Africa, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. It is rarely cultivated.

The mature fruit has a leathery skin and a thin layer of pulp. The seed has an oil content of 31.5%.^[2]

1 Use as food



Bai makok, the name for the leaves of the *Spondias mombin* in Thai



The fruit, of which the seed can easily be seen in this image, can also be used for making green papaya salad in Thailand and Laos

The fruit pulp is either eaten fresh or made into juice, concentrate, jellies, and sherbets.



Fruits in a supermarket in the Dominican Republic

In Thailand this fruit is called *makok* (Thai: มะกอก) and is used in *som tam* as a secondary ingredient. The young leaves, which taste slightly bitter and sour, are sometimes served raw together with certain types of *nam phrik* (Thai chilli pastes).

As a member of the Sumac family (Anacardiaceae), exposure to the sap of this species may result in an identical allergic reaction to that of the poison ivy plant. Those with a known sensitivity to urushiol should exercise caution in consuming or handling this species.

2 Use in Medicine

The fruit-juice is used as a febrifuge and diuretic. The roots are well-known febrifuge on the Ivory Coast, being sometimes used with leaves of *Ximenia*, *Premna hispida*, *Ficus* sp., and *Alchornea*. They are pulped, boiled in water, and drunk, or used as a lotion or for baths. The bark is used as a purgative and in local applications for leprosy (Kerharo and Bouquet). The bark decoction is used for severe cough, causing relief through vomiting. The dry pulverized bark is applied as a dressing to the circumcision wound. The bark contains a certain amount of tannin. A decoction of the mashed leaves is used by the Ibos (Nigeria) for washing a swollen face. The leaves, ground with sugar, are rubbed on the mouth and gums. A leaf infusion is a common cough remedy or used as a laxative for fever with constipation. A leaf decoction is used for gonorrhoea. The leaves with the leaves of *Vitex quinata* and *Terminalia avicennoides*, are used on the Ivory Coast for fresh wounds preventing inflamma-

tion. All these leaves are used for leprosy. Crushed with lemon they are effective for worms in children. With *Alchornea* leaves and lemon a gargle is made from the leaves. They are crushed to obtain the juice. A decoction of pounded leaves is used as an eye lotion and the juice pressed from young, warm leaves is given to children for stomach troubles. The young leaves are used as an infusion taken internally or as a warm astringent lotion by women in confinement in Sierra Leone. In the Congo the young leaves pounded to a frothy pulp are used as a bed for paralytics, who are then massaged with them to the accompaniment of incantations.^[3] In Suriname's traditional medicine, the infusion of the leaves is used as a treatment of eye inflammation, diarrhea and venereal diseases.

The extract has shown anti-inflammatory activity in Wistar rats.^[4]

3 Language

Spondias mombin has several common names. Throughout the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Mexico it is called *jobo* (derived from the Carib language^[5]). Among the English-speaking Caribbean islands it is known as *yellow mombin* or *hog plum*, while in Jamaica it is called *Spanish plum*, *gully plum* or *coolie plum*. In Brazil, the fruit is known by several different names, such as *cajá*, *taperebá* and *ambaló*. In Peru, it is known as *uvos* or *mango ciruelo*. In Ghana, it is hog plum or *Ashanti plum*. It is called "Akukor" in the Ewe language of Ghana. In Nigeria, the fruit is called *Iyeye* or *Yeye* in the Yoruba language,^[6] *ngulungwu* in Igbo and *isada* in Hausa.^[7] Other common names include *hug plum*, *true yellow mombin*, *golden apple* or *Java plum*, *Ambaralla* in Sri Lanka. In Assamese it is called *Omora* (????). Similarly in Bengali, it is called *Amra*. In Surinam the fruit is called *Mope*. In Goan Konkani, it is called "Ambado". In Malayalam, it is called "Ambazham" and "Junglee Aam" in Hindi. In Costa Rica, it is called *yuplón*. In El Salvador, it is called *Jocote de Corona*. In Vietnam, it is called *Cóc*.

4 Plant Description

A small deciduous tree up to 20 m (60 ft.) high and 1.5 m (5 ft.) in girth, moderately buttressed; bark thick, corky, deeply fissured, slash pale pink, darkening rapidly, branches low, branchlets glabrous; leaves pinnate, leaflets 5-8 opposite pairs with a terminal leaflet, 10 X 5 cm (4 X 2 in.), oblong or oblong lanceolate, broadly acuminate, glabrous; flowers (Jan.-May) sweet-scented, in large, lax terminal panicles of small white flowers; fruits (July-Sept.) nearly 4 cm (1.5 in.) long, ovoid yellow, acid, wrinkled when dry; 1 seed.

The fruits have a sharp, somewhat acid taste and are edi-

ble.

5 See also

- List of plants of Cerrado vegetation of Brazil
- Amazonian cuisine
- *Spondias purpurea* (Purple mombin)
- *Spondias tuberosa* (Umbú)

6 Notes

- [1] "The Plant List: A Working List of All Plant Species". Retrieved June 27, 2014.
- [2] [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0960-8524\(02\)00147-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0960-8524(02)00147-5)
- [3] Woody Plants of Ghana. F.R. Irvine. Oxford University Press, 1961. Great Britain. p. 565-566
- [4] Nworu CS, Akah PA, Okoye FB, Toukam DK, Udeh J, Esimone CO., "The leaf extract of *Spondias mombin* L. displays an anti-inflammatory effect and suppresses inducible formation of tumor necrosis factor- α and nitric oxide (NO)." *J Immunotoxicol*. 2011 Jan-Mar;8(1):10-6
- [5] Spanish Royal Academy Dictionary
- [6] See Ayoka *et al.* (2008, p.130), Oladele (2008, p.5). Note that Aiyeloja & Ajewole (2006, p.57) give *agbalumo* as the local name in Osun State, however other sources identify *agbalumo* elsewhere in Nigeria with the African star apple, *Chrysophyllum albidum* and related species; see for example Aiyeloja & Bello (2006, p.18) and Oyelade *et al.* (2005).
- [7] Aiyeloja & Bello (2006, p.19)

7 References

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Guide.

8 External links

- *Spondias mombin* in West African plants – A Photo

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