

SANDALWOOD

coral bean tree, false sandalwood, coral wood, red sandalwood, Sandalbead, Bead Tree, Red Bead Tree

Adenanthera pavonina

Fabaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Adenanthera pavonina is a fast-growing, medium-to-large sized deciduous tree, reaching heights of 6-15 m. Its spreading canopy is filled with feather-like foliage. Creamy yellow, fragrant flowers are borne in 12-15 cm long, narrow inflorescences at the end of each branch. Dark brown pods (15-22 cm long) each bear 8-12 scarlet-colored, showy seeds.

Uses

Leaves and cooked seeds are valuable sources of protein for many cultures. Seeds are used as beads and are also high in oil, which can be extracted. The bark is a source of red coloring for dye. *A. pavonina* leaves are an important fodder source, as is the wood for timber and fuelwood. Various medicinal products from the leaves, wood, and bark carry cultural significance throughout Asia. With a wide-spreading canopy, *A. pavonina* is commonly utilized for shade, serving as a nurse crop or shade tree for various agronomic and horticulture species production (e.g., coffee). A nitrogen-fixing legume, *A. pavonina* leaves enrich the soil as a green manure.

Cultivation

- **Elevation** - up to 400 m
- **Rainfall** - 2000-6000 mm
- **Soil Types** - pH 4.5-7.5; well-drained
- **Temperature Range** - 12-36°C
- **Day Length Sensitivity** - none
- **Light** - tolerates light shade to full sun

Seeds of *A. pavonina* contain a hard outer coating that requires scarification. Before planting, soak seeds in warm water for 12-24 hours. Trees have also been propagated by large cuttings. Spacing should be wide enough to accommodate extensive canopy spread.

Harvesting and Seed Production

A deciduous tree, *A. pavonina* loses its leaves briefly each year. Harvesting of leaves for food or fodder is done continuously, as needed, allowing enough biomass to remain for tree health. Seeds are ready for harvest once pods turn black. They do dehisce—split open—though seeds cling to seed pods.

Pests and Diseases

Sapstain (a fungal infection) and termites are common pests.

Cooking and Nutrition

Young leaves are eaten as any other leguminous leafy vegetable: raw, in stir-fry, boiled, etc. Seeds are usually boiled to remove toxicity and roasted. Seeds are rich in oil and high in protein.

References

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Orwa, C., A. Mutua, R. Kindt, R. Jamnadass, A. Simons. 2009. Agroforestry Database: a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0. <http://old.worldagroforestry.org/treedb2/speciesprofile.php?Spid=144>. Accessed 23 August 2019.

Tropical Plants Database, Ken Fern. tropical.theferns.info. tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Adenanthera+pavonina. Accessed 23 August 2019