

# TOON TREE

Australian Red Cedar, Burma Cedar, Indian Mahogany, Lud, Toona Tree

*Toona ciliata*

Meliaceae

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## ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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### Origin

The first recorded Toon Trees were found in Zimbabwe in 1903 and now can be found in other African countries and Australia. The Toon Tree is a large deciduous tree, reaching 20 m - 30 m (70 ft -100 ft) high and 1.8 m - 3 m (6 ft -10 ft) in girth with a large spreading crown and shallow roots. The wood is valuable for firewood, charcoal, timber, windbreaks, furniture and as a substrate for growing shitake mushrooms. There is a strong, long-lasting spicy odor to the wood and the flowers. The flowers also produce abundant nectar and are an ingredient in yellow dyes. The leaves are used as fodder for animals and as mulch. Some bark extracts have insect-repelling properties.

### Cultivation

Toon Trees are quick to grow where ground has recently been cleared by fire or for cultivation. When cut back, the trunk and branches will quickly resprout. Under favorable conditions, this tree will grow aggressively and can become invasive. When young, the trees need good moisture and minimal competition from weeds, but when established can stand rainfall as little as 750 mm (28 in) per year and temperature up to 49° C (120° F). Being frost hardy, it can grow at elevations up to 1500 m (5000 ft). The Toon Tree prefers moist soil of ravines, stream banks even swamps as long as the soil is not compacted. It is not suited for dry hilly slopes.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

The Toon Tree produces an abundance of lightweight seeds with wings at both ends that are easily blown by the wind. Seeds should be collected from the tree, not the ground. Seeds should be planted with the wings up, as soon as possible for best germination (8 -15 days) in a shaded, raised seedbed, with adequate moisture. Limit the seed storage time to 12 months at 5°- 8° C (41°- 46° F) in plastic bags. Viability is not possible if seeds are stored at room temperature.

### Pests and Diseases

Insects that attack the Toon Tree are the toon shootborer and the mahogany shootborer. Termites, fungus and browsing livestock are also attracted to toon tree seedlings. Sawdust from the Toon Tree may cause irritation of the skin of humans.

### Cooking and Nutrition

In Southeast Asia, the leaves of the Toon Tree are eaten as a vegetable. The bark is made into an astringent and a tonic to treat dysentery and to heal wounds.