

GLIRICIDIA

Quick Stick, Rat Killer

Gliricidia sepium

Leguminosae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Gliricidia sepium is indigenous to Mexico, Central America, West Indies, and Columbia but can be naturalized elsewhere. Quick-stick, an English name from Jamaica, refers to the ease of propagating this tree from leafless sticks of 0.5 to 2 m (2-6 ft) in length that root with ease in almost any soil. *Gliricidia* grows to an average height of 2-15 m (6-50 ft).

Uses

Gliricidia is a great option for a living fence. The tree is capable of fixing atmospheric nitrogen and serves well as a green manure to increase soil organic matter, aiding in the recycling of soil nutrients as it produces much leaf litter. It also improves soil aeration and reduces soil temperature. It makes a good hedge but needs frequent pruning. Its flowers and flower buds are boiled and fried as a vegetable, as are the very young leaves. Flowers are a good source of nectar for bees. The leafy material is considered good fodder; the leaves contain over 20% crude protein. *Gliricidia* is used as a shade tree for coffee and cacao. It is an excellent tree for erosion control due to its ease of establishment and rapid growth. Its seeds and bark are mixed with grain to obtain an effective rat poison. The wood is hard, coarse textured with an irregular grain, very durable and termite resistant. The timber is said to finish smoothly and be used for furniture, agricultural instruments, posts, railroad ties, and heavy construction. The older wood is especially good for fuel.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Madre de Cacao
 - Mata Raton

Cultivation

- Elevation: 0-1600m
- Rainfall: 600-3500mm (24-135inches)
- Temperature: 15-30 C (60-85 F)
- Soil: pure sand to deep alluvial lake-bed deposits; grows on marginally saline soils (pH 4.5-6.2)

Harvesting and Seed Production

The foliage is often attacked by aphids that secrete sweet honeydew, which attracts ants, causing leaves to fall. Otherwise, the wood is said to be highly resistant to termites and decay.

Cooking and Nutrition

Gliricidia sepium flowers and flower buds are boiled and fried as a vegetable as well as the leaves. Take some caution in the use of the plant as a food or animal feed due to its potential toxic characteristics to non-ruminants.

References

Heuzé V., Tran G., 2015. *Gliricidia* (*Gliricidia sepium*). Feedipedia, a programme by INRA, CIRAD, AFZ and FAO. <https://www.feedipedia.org/node/552> Last updated on May 11, 2015, 14:34