

# POD MAHOGANY

Arbre Makola, Mahogany Bean, Afzelia

*Afzelia quanzensis*

Leguminosae

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## ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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### Description

This tree is indigenous to Malawi and now grows in West, East and Central Africa. In South Africa it is considered a rare species. The wood is durable and fairly resistant to termites.

### Uses

The Pod Mahogany bean tree is used primarily for its durable, reddish-brown wood in the making of furniture, floors, doors, stairs and windows as well as for firewood. It has nitrogen fixating properties and is suitable for growing in an agroforestry plot. The pods and leaves can be used for cattle fodder. It reaches heights of 25 m (82 ft) when left unpruned for use as an ornamental shade tree. Though its roots are used medicinally in applications outside the body, they are very toxic to humans if ingested.

### Common Names

- French
  - arbre makola
  - mahogany bean
  - collier
- Swahili
  - collier Mbambakofi

### Cultivation

- Soil requirements: deep, sandy, well-drained soil
- Rainfall/irrigation: 1000 mm (39 in)
- Elevation: less than 1800 m (5,900 ft)
- Temperature range: 17°-30° C (63°-86° F)

Propagation is by direct seeding or seedlings grown in pots and transplanted. It grows slowly at first, especially in colder regions. It is very drought-resistant and grows best in wooded areas around lakes or open fields. It produces many flowers in early spring and great quantities of seeds in the fall.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

This species produces an abundance of flat, woody, dark brown pods every year. When the pods turn from green to brown and are 10-25 cm (4 - 10 in) long, they may be harvested and dried in the sun. Beat pods with a stick to release the 6-10 seeds inside. The seeds are black with an orange-red aril (fleshy, cap-like covering on one end.) Remove the aril and continue drying in the sun. Seeds can be stored at room temperature, in airtight containers for several years.

### Pests and Diseases

The greatest threat from pests is baboons, squirrels and other scavengers which will strip the tree of its pods, especially in the dry season when other food is scarce. Therefore, it is best to watch closely for maturation of pods and harvest quickly. The leaves of this tree are attacked by several species of butterfly larvae.

### Cooking and Nutrition

Only the very young leaves, either fresh or steamed, are edible by humans as a vegetable. The roots are poisonous though are used medicinally in poultices for kidney problems, snake bites, and chest pains