

# TARA

Spiny Holdback, Guarango, Poinciana Spinosa, Wattle

*Caesalpinia spinosa*

Leguminosae

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## ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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### Description

Tara was first grown in the southwest portion of the island of Madagascar. It is now found on the continents of Asia, Africa, North and South America. It is a leguminous, spiny, slow-growing shrub which can grow into a tree that can produce seed pods for up to 65 years.

### Uses

Tara seed powder is used in minute quantities as a thickener in manufacturing many foodstuffs. The greatest use is for the tannin content of the seeds as a treatment for leather. It has some use for lumber, firewood, as a windbreak or living fence especially against goats, which prefer not to eat it. In Peru, it is used medicinally as well as for the dye made from the seeds and roots. It is an attractive ornamental with large yellow/orange flowers.

### Cultivation

- Elevation: Up to 3000 m ( 9800 ft)
- Rainfall: 100-300 mm (4-12 in) Can withstand long droughts of 6-10 months.
- Soil Types: Tolerates many extremes of poor, dry, alkaline or acidic soils
- Temperature range: 14° - 28° C ( 57° - 82° F)

### Harvesting and Seed Production

Scarify and soak seeds overnight before planting. Transplant when 40 cm (15 in) high. Tara trees will begin to produce seeds in 4-5 years. The pod will split open indicating that the seeds inside are ripe. Avoid the spiny prickles on its branches when harvesting the seed pods.. The seeds store well at low humidity and low temperature.

### Pests and Diseases

This shrub does not appear to be susceptible to pests or diseases.

### Cooking and Nutrition

Tara seeds can be eaten raw or green after removing the hard seedcoat. They have a cashew-like taste. Caution is advised. No more than 80 seeds should be consumed at one time as digestive upset may occur. Since the seeds contain a good amount of protein (14-16%), it is advisable to cook or roast them to remove harmful substances and make Tara seed more acceptable in the diet.