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Terminalia catappa L.

ALMOND FAMILY

Combretaceae

COMMON NAMES

English: bastard almond, Indian almond, Malabar almond, Malay almond, sea almond

DESCRIPTION

Deciduous tree (sheds most or all of its leaves at the end of the growing season), [15–25 (–30) m tall], with a thick trunk (1–1.5 m in diameter), often buttressed at the base; whorls of nearly horizontal branches up the trunk.

Bark: Grey-brown, becoming rough with age.

Leaves: Dark green above, paler below, veins conspicuous, leathery, glossy, hairless, turning bright scarlet, dark red or yellow, egg-shaped (15–35 cm long and 10–19 cm wide) with narrower end at base, tips rounded or sharply pointed, held opposite or sub-opposite on stems, often clustered at branch tips; leaf stalks short.

Flowers: Greenish-white, tiny with no petals (5–6 mm wide), held in clusters (6–18 cm long).

Fruits: Drupes (fruits with a stony centre), green turning yellow and finally red as they mature, egg-shaped or oval (5–7 cm long and 3–5.5 cm wide) with two ridges, in clusters; containing a single cylindrical seed (3 cm long and 1 cm wide).

ORIGIN

Australia, Cambodia, India, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Fuelwood, tannins, edible fruit and ornament.

INVADES

Disturbed areas, urban open space, forest edges/gaps and coastal forests.

IMPACTS

Has the ability to establish dense stands, to the detriment of native flora and fauna. It can tolerate well-drained soils and salt spray, which means it can establish readily in coastal regions. It is considered to be invasive in Florida, USA, in Brazil, and on several Caribbean Islands (CABI, 2016). In Kenya, it is a host for the invasive fruitfly *Bactrocera invadens* (Drew, Tsuruta & White; Tephritidae), allowing fly populations to remain high during the off-season when cultivated host plants are not fruiting (Rwomushana *et al.*, 2008).

NOTES

Present on many Caribbean Islands and naturalized on Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Saba, St Eustatius, Dominica, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Montserrat, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Martin (CABI, 2021). Invasive on the Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, and Trinidad and Tobago (Rojas-Sandoval *et al.*, 2017). Based on our surveys *T. catappa* is naturalized on St Kitts and Nevis, and invasive on Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines, especially along the coast where a large number of seedlings could be found growing under and around established trees (A. Witt, *pers. obs.*).



Terminalia catappa L.

