PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Senegalia catechu* (L. f.) P.J. H. Hurter & Mabb.

**GENUS** *Senegalia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

**COMMON NAMES** Catechu acacia, Cutch tree

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Wood resin, Bark - tea, Gum

The wood is boiled to extract the resin. This is rolled into balls and grated and mixed with betel nuts and lime and chewed.
The bark is also used to chew with betel nut.
Small pieces of wood are put into hot water to make tea.

## DESCRIPTION

A tree. It grows 5-15 m high. The branches are spiny. The trunk is dark brown with cracks along its length. The leaves are compound with 9-30 pairs of leaflet stalks and 20-50 leaflets along them. These are oblong and have a sharp end. They are 3-4 cm long. The flower spike is 2.5-10 cm long in the axils of leaves. The flowers are 5 mm long. They are white have have a slight smell. The fruit are pods which are thin and have a short beak. They are flat and 5-7.5 cm long by 1-1.5 cm wide. The seeds are shiny brown and 3-10 occur in each pod.

## HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It grows in dry open forest in the west of Thailand. They grow in the drier plains of India. In Nepal it grows between 200-1,400 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

The tree is grown from seeds. It can be grown from cuttings.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

## NOTES

There are about 1,350 Acacia species. Over 1,000 occur in Australia. This one yields catechu used in dyeing. It has anticancer properties. Also as Mimosaceae.

## PICTURES




Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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