PLANT FACT SHEET

Afzelia africana Sm. ex Pers.

GENUS *Afzelia* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES African mahogany, Lucky-bean tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Leaves, Fruit - aril, Vegetable, Flower

The aril of the seed is eaten. The seeds are used as a soup thickener. The seeds are also used as a spice.
The young leaves and young fruit are eaten.
The seeds are made into flour for biscuits.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree. It grows 6-30 m tall. Often is loses its leaves during part of the year. It has thick branches. It has short thick buttresses near the base. The bark is dark brown. Large pieces of bark flake off. The leaves are compound. The leaf stalks are 32 cm long. There are 2-5 pairs of leaflets. They are oval and 5-15 cm long. The tip is pointed. The flowers occur in heads about 10 cm long. Each flower is 1-2 cm long and has only one petal. The flower is green-white with pink lines. The fruit is a large woody straight pod. It can be 10-20 cm long and 5-8 cm wide. The seeds are black and 3 cm long. They are half covered with a soft bright orange aril. They lie in white pith.

HABITAT

It grows in the tropics. It grows in wooded grassland and better rainfall areas. It can grow in dry stony soils. It grows between 1,220-1,370 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed can be self sown, sown where they are to grow or can be put in a nursery. The orange aril should be removed from the seed and cutting the seed coat slightly may help seed germinate. Seed can be stored for a long time in an airtight container. Plants can be budded.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The plant is slow growing.

NOTES

There are 15 Afzelia species. They occur in the tropics. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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