PLANT FACT SHEET

Saraca asoca (Roxb.) de Wilde

GENUS *Saraca* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Sorrow-less tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds - masticatory, Leaves

The seeds are chewed in place of betel nut.
The young tender leaves are cooked with meat.

DESCRIPTION

A small evergreen tree. It grows 6-9 m high. The bark is dark brown. The leaves are compound and 30 cm long. There are 4 pairs of leaflets. These are oval and pointed. They can be 25 cm long by 6 cm wide. New leaves are pink. The flowers have a scent. The flowers are orange-yellow. They are in flat topped arrangement 7.5-10 cm across. The individual flowers are 2.5 cm long. The fruit are leathery pods. These are red but turn grey at maturity. They are 5-15 cm long by 2.5 cm wide. They are pointed at the tip. There are 4-8 grey seeds. The pods split into 2 halves and curl up on ripening.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. In the eastern Himalayas it grows up to 750 m altitude. It needs to be sheltered from hot winds. It is best in a lightly shady place.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is easily grown from seed. It can also be grown from stem cuttings.

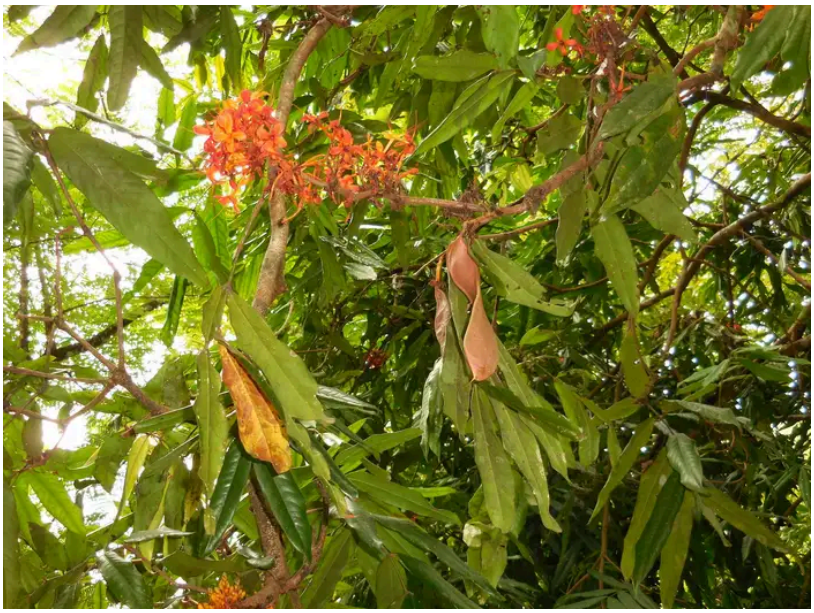
Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree comes into flowering when 4-6 years old. Fruit take 6 months to ripen.

NOTES

There are about 25 Saraca species. Also as Caesalpinaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/46ab4eb9-3bfc-4eca-aea6-8bae67ae9072