PLANT FACT SHEET

Samanea saman (Jacq.) Merr.

GENUS *Samanea* **FAMILY** Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Raintree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: pod, Leaves, Fruit, Seeds - spice

The pulpy layer of the ripe pods is eaten raw.
A drink is also made from the pulp.
Young leaves have been eaten in salads when food is short.
The seeds are used as a spice.

DESCRIPTION

A large tree with a widely spreading crown. It grows up to 25 m tall. It can grow to 60 m high. It has a short thick trunk. The branches spread out horizontally and can be 30 m long. The bark is a distinctive yellow. It loses its leaves during the year. The leaves have leaflets which are evenly in two rows. They are feather like. There are 8 to 12 leaflets in a row. There are 12 to 16 in the upper row. The leaves fold inwards at night and during rain. The leaves can be 35 cm long. The secondary division of the leaf can be 20 cm long and the leaflets 3 cm by 2 cm. The flowers are at the ends of branches and pink. They occur in round heads about 5 cm across. They are on long stalks 10-12 cm long. The fruit are pods. The pods are straight and somewhat fleshy. The pods can be 20 cm long by 2 cm across. The pods are slightly flattened.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It is native to tropical America. Common and widely planted as a shade tree. Trees grow almost wild in some areas and are planted as a street tree in coastal towns. It suits river-side locations in dry areas. It should grow up to about 1800 m altitude in the equatorial tropics. It grows best in the tropical lowlands from sea level to 300 m altitude and with a rainfall of 600-3000 mm per year. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Trees are grown from seeds. They can also be grown from cuttings. Seeds need to put into hot water for 3 minutes then cooled and allowed to soak for 24 hours before sowing. Seed can be stored for 6 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is a quick growing tree.

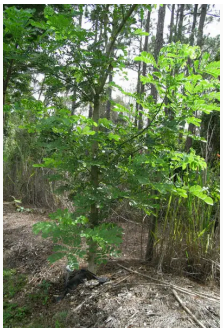
NOTES

There is only one Samanea species. Also as Mimosaceae. It is the flower emblem of Venezuela.
Possibly now Albizia saman.
Also as Mimosaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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