Holarrhena floribunda

LOCAL NAMES
- English (false rubber tree)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
Holarrhena floribunda is a shrub to medium sized tree, 4.5-15 m high. Leaves shining, mostly ovate-acuminate, or ovate-lanceolate, 5-18 cm long and 2-8 cm broad with 6-12 pairs of lateral nerves.

Flowers white, scented and in almost umbel-like inflorescences; corolla-tube 5-9 mm long and lobes 3.5-8 mm and overlapping to the right. Anthers fertile to the base.

Paired narrowly cylindrical fruiting follicles, 30-60 cm, with seeds having apical tufts of hair.

Two varieties are recognized; var. floribunda with glabrous or almost glabrous leaves even when young and var. tomentella with densely pubescent leaves. The latter is common in the Sudan and Gambia.

The generic epithet Holarrhena is derived from Greek meaning complete male, whereas the specific epithet refers to its prolific flowering trait.

BIOLOGY
H. floribunda is self pollinating (hermaphroditic).
Holarrhena floribunda
(G.Don.) Dur. & Schinz
Apocynaceae

ECOLOGY
Occurs in relic deciduous, closed woodland forests, sometimes in fringing and riverine forest and on inselbergs in northern guinea savanna.

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION
Native: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo
Exotic:

The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.
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PRODUCTS
Timber: Timber widely used to construct granaries or cribs in Benin. Its white wood is resistant to attack by Prostephanus truncatus. H. floribunda is considered the best for carving native stools.

Latex or rubber: A rubber like product obtained from this plant is used to adulterate genuine rubber.

Poison: Most members of the family Apocynaceae are poisonous, therefore H. floribunda material should be handled carefully especially for medicinal purposes.

Medicine: Stem bark of H. floribunda is used in traditional medicine to treat malaria, dysentery, fever, female sterility, skin infections venereal diseases and snake bites. In Nigeria, convolution, especially in children, is managed by traditional healers employing leaf extracts of H. floribunda. Fractions containing saponins, polar steroidal glycosides, steroidal glycosides and alkaloids exhibited some antibacterial activity against Escherichia coli, Bacillus subtilis and antifungal activity against Candida albicans. The saponin fraction markedly inhibited growth of Aspergillus niger. Conessine, an alkaloid from stem and root bark of H. floribunda, has been used as an amoebicide antidysenteric and febrifuge.

SERVICES
Ornamental: It flowers prolifically and can therefore be an ideal ornamental tree.
PESTS AND DISEASES
The larvae of Umbrasia epimethea and Bunaea alcinoe seriously defoliate H. floribunda in Nigeria. U. epimethea appears restricted to H. floribunda.
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FURTHER READING


SUGGESTED CITATION