

Saba senegalensis

(A. DC.) Pichon

Apocynaceae

LOCAL NAMES

French (saba, liane saba); Mandinka (saba); Wolof (madd)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION

Saba senegalensis is a liana up to 40 m long, often shrub like; trunk up to 20 cm in diameter. Bark rough or scaly.

Leaves opposite, petiole 4-14.5 mm long; lamina 1.5-3 times as long as wide, apex rounded, obtuse, shortly acuminate or apiculate with 7-14 pairs of secondary veins, tertiary venation reticulate or scalariform, submarginal veins abundant.

Inflorescence a 3-30 flowered lax cyme, peduncle 2.5-6 cm long, pedicels 2.5-8 mm long. Sepals shortly apiculate. 1-1.5 times as long as wide, corolla with a yellow throat; tube 5-9 times as long as the calyx. Stamens inserted 3.5-6 mm above the corolla base; filaments 0.4-1 x 0.1 mm, anthers 1-2 x 0.2-0.5 mm, ovary often ribbed, glabrous with ca 30 ovules, style 1.5-3 mm long, pistil-head 1.7-2 mm long, basal part up to 1.8 mm long.

Fruit 5-15 x 4-10 cm, 1 mm thick walled.

The generic name is adapted from the Maninka name of the plant, the specific epithet *senegalensis* refers to Senegal in West Africa where the plant was first collected for identification.

BIOLOGY

This hermaphroditic liane flowers all year through.



Saba Senegalensis fruit (Antonie Kalinganire)



Saba senegalensis (Boffa, Jean-Marc)



Saba senegalensis (Boffa, Jean-Marc)

ECOLOGY

S. senegalensis is commonly found in riverine areas and open woodland.

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS

Altitude: 0-800 m

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania

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.

PRODUCTS

Food: The fruits are tasty, sweet-sour, yellow pulped and quite popular, often appearing in local markets in its fruit season.

Gum or resin: In Cote d'Ivoire the latex is used as an adhesive for poison preparations for arrows.

Latex or rubber: Produces an inferior quality rubber which is used in adulterating genuine rubber. The latex is collected by placing the cut stem in a gourd with adequate water; the resulting emulsion is antitusive and emetic. Latex hardens on exposure.

Medicine: The leaves are eaten to stop vomiting. In Senegal the leaves are prepared in sauces and condiments as an appetizer with a salty taste. Bark decoctions are taken for dysenteriform diarrhoea and food-poisoning. Crushed leaf infusion has haemostatic/antiseptic usage and the powdered root efficacious on children's burns. The latex is used for pulmonary troubles and tuberculosis. Fruits eaten as a sterility treatment.

SERVICES

Erosion control: *S. senegalensis* is a riverine species important in soil conservation.

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FURTHER READING

Burkill HM. 1994. Useful plants of West Tropical Africa. Vol. 2. Families E-I. Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

Leeuwenberg AJM and van Dilst FJH. 1989. Saba (Pichon) Pichon, series of revisions of Apocynaceae 27. Bull. Jard. Nat. Belg. 59(1/2): 189-206.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Orwa C, A Mutua, Kindt R, Jamnadass R, S Anthony. 2009 Agroforestry Database: a tree reference and selection guide version 4.0 (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org/sites/treedbs/treedatabases.asp>)