

# TREES BEES USE SWEET TAMARIND

## *Pithecellobium dulce*

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### Apicultural value

The flowers are visited frequently by honey bees *Apis cerana*, *Apis dorsata*, *Apis florea* and stingless bees *Trigona* spp. Practical experience shows that the honey flow is quick and high when colonies are located near the trees during peak blooming. The flower yields thin, white honey and provides a good volume of pollen. Therefore *Pithecellobium dulce* is a good source of nectar and pollen for bees.

### Names

Botanical name *Pithecellobium dulce*

In Tamil: Kodukapuli

Other names: Manila tamarind, Sweet tamarind

### Family

Mimosaceae

### Description

Grows from coastal region to 1,200 m above sea level, in open dry lands. It is a highly drought resistant and fast growing tree, widely grown as a hedge and wind break.

*Pithecellobium dulce* is indigenous to tropical America and widely cultivated there as well as in Asia.

### Botanical description

*Pithecellobium dulce* is an armed tree, 15-18 m high, with dense foliage that is soft and fibrous.

Bark: shiny, grey bark also with spikes.

Leaves: alternate, pinnate two pairs, oblong-oblancoelate, petiole spine erect.

Fruits: strap shaped pod, circinate, turgid.

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*Pithecellobium dulce* flowers



*Habitat*

The fruit has a mild flavour.

Flowers: cream coloured, bisexual, in spikes, terminal or axillary. It flowers twice a year: April to June and in October to November.

Seeds: 7-8 seeds, black in colour, orbicular with white aril.

### Uses

The fruit are eaten raw and used in beverages and garnishing. *Pithecellobium dulce* is an excellent fodder tree for cattle.

### Propagation

Propagated by seed. Seeds are recalcinate and have a high germination rate. They can be directly planted in pits or raised in nursery bags and planted after six months.

#### What plants do your bees use?

Send details to B/D, address on page 2.

Below: (left) The fruits; (centre) Seeds with aril; (right) Seeds

