

Ceiba pentandra



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BOMBACACEAE

Synonyms: *Bombax pentandrum* L.

Common Names: **Cotton Tree, Ceiba, Silk Cotton Tree, Duppy Tree, Kapok**

Tree with swollen trunk, buttressed, 10-40 metres tall, deciduous or partly deciduous. This is one of the largest native trees in tropical America, now distributed throughout the tropics.

St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Clarendon, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, Trelawny, St. Thomas, likely in every parish

HABITAT: Occasional, sometimes planted; sea level-760 metres.

BARK: Light tan to pale gray, smooth, lightly fissured, with or without **conical prickles** on trunk and branches; blaze thin, hard; outer edge of slash red-brown, inner pinkish-orange with light yellow lines, grainy and fibrous.

LEAVES: **Palmately compound**, alternate, leaflets 5-8 (15), lanceolate to oblanceolate, acutely acuminate, cuneate, sessile at base, 10-20 cm long, 3-4 cm broad, glabrous.

FLOWERS: Fascicled, pedicels about 3 cm long; calyx shallowly 5-lobed, 1-1.5 cm long, glabrous; petals 2-4 cm long, creamy white changing to peach or rose coloured, densely brown silky-villous outside, stamens 5-15 in 5 bundles of 1-3. Flowering January to February.

FRUIT: Dehiscent woody capsule 10-30 cm long, splitting in five parts; seeds subglobose, hard, black, 4-6 mm in diameter, imbedded in white to **brown cotton** (kapok). Fruiting March.

WOOD: Wood soft, spongy, white, perishable, very light, 368 kg/m³ (specific gravity 0.37).

USES: Dugout canoes, corestock for veneer in other countries; cotton not used much in Jamaica.