



## BLUE MAHOE (*Hibiscus elatus*)

The Blue Mahoe is the national tree of Jamaica. This is a fairly common tree which is cultivated extensively. It is native to Cuba and Jamaica but has been introduced into other countries.

This tall, straight tree has few branches arising from all levels of the trunk and may grow up to 20 m tall. The leaves are large (20 cm long), broad, heart-shaped and pointed at the tip.

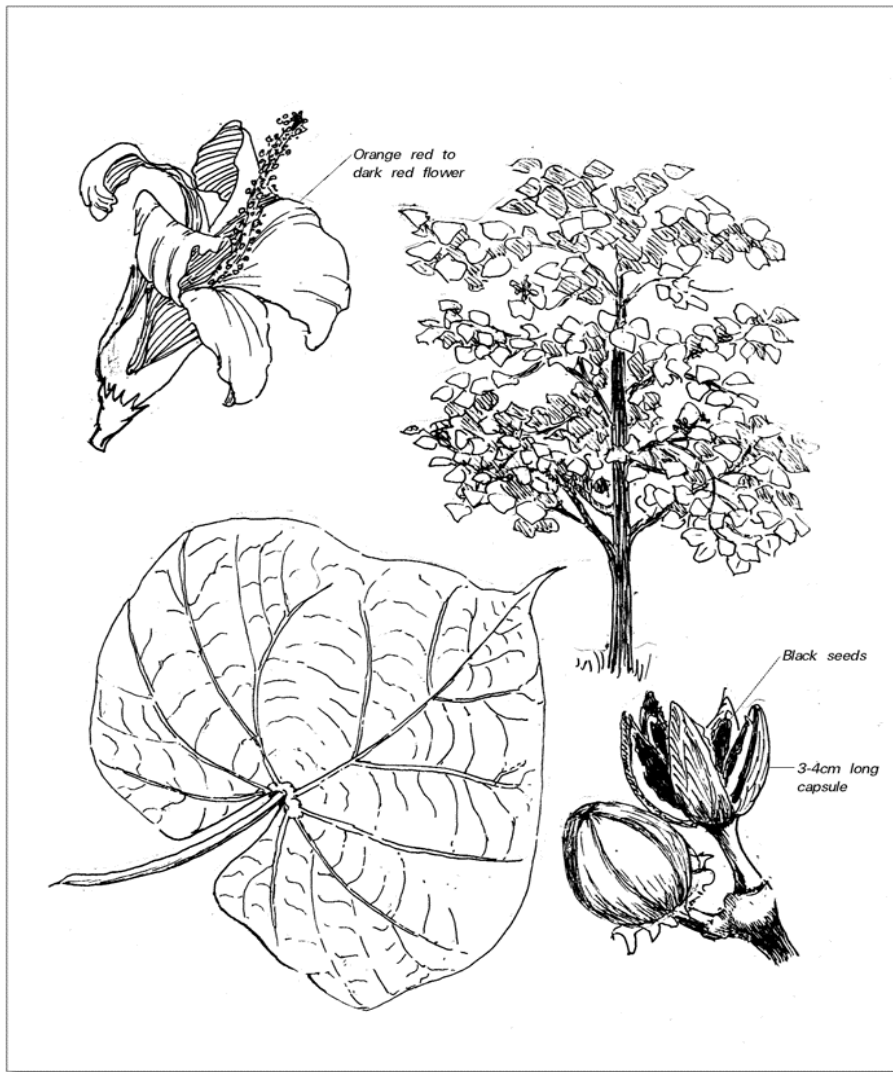
The plant is related to the Hibiscus (shoe-black) and its flowers are very similar in shape and arrangement of parts. The flowers which can be seen throughout the year grow singly and have colours ranging from orange-yellow and orange red to deep red. The fruits are small brown pods that may be seen all year.

Although commonly seen along the plains this tree shows an obvious preference for damp mountain areas and grows at altitudes from sea level to 1000 m. The name Mountain Mahoe is sometimes used to distinguish it from the Seaside Mahoe. It has been used in many reforestation programmes.

The name “Blue Mahoe” refers to the blueish tinge in the wood when dressed. The wood is hard and durable and produces a fine finish when made into furniture and craft items like trays and bowls. The fibre from the bark is used to make strong ropes and for tying cigars.

## BLUE MAHOE (*Hibiscus elatus*)

Family: <b>Malvaceae</b>	Species: <i>Hibiscus elatus</i>	Author: Sw.
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Height: 20m	Habitat: Moist forest, sea level-1000m	Persistence: Evergreen
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