



## CALABASH

(*Crescentia cujete*)

Calabash trees are common along Jamaican roadside and in old pastures, thickets and woodlands. It is native to Florida, the West Indies and continental tropical America. The calabash belongs to the Bignonia family and is a medium-sized tree varying from 6-10 m in height. It grows up to altitudes of 800 m.

The trees have long thin branches which carry small, oblong-shaped, bright green leaves in clusters. The leaves which are leathery in texture are paler on the undersides than on the tops and are 5 cm - 20 cm long. The bark is light brown.

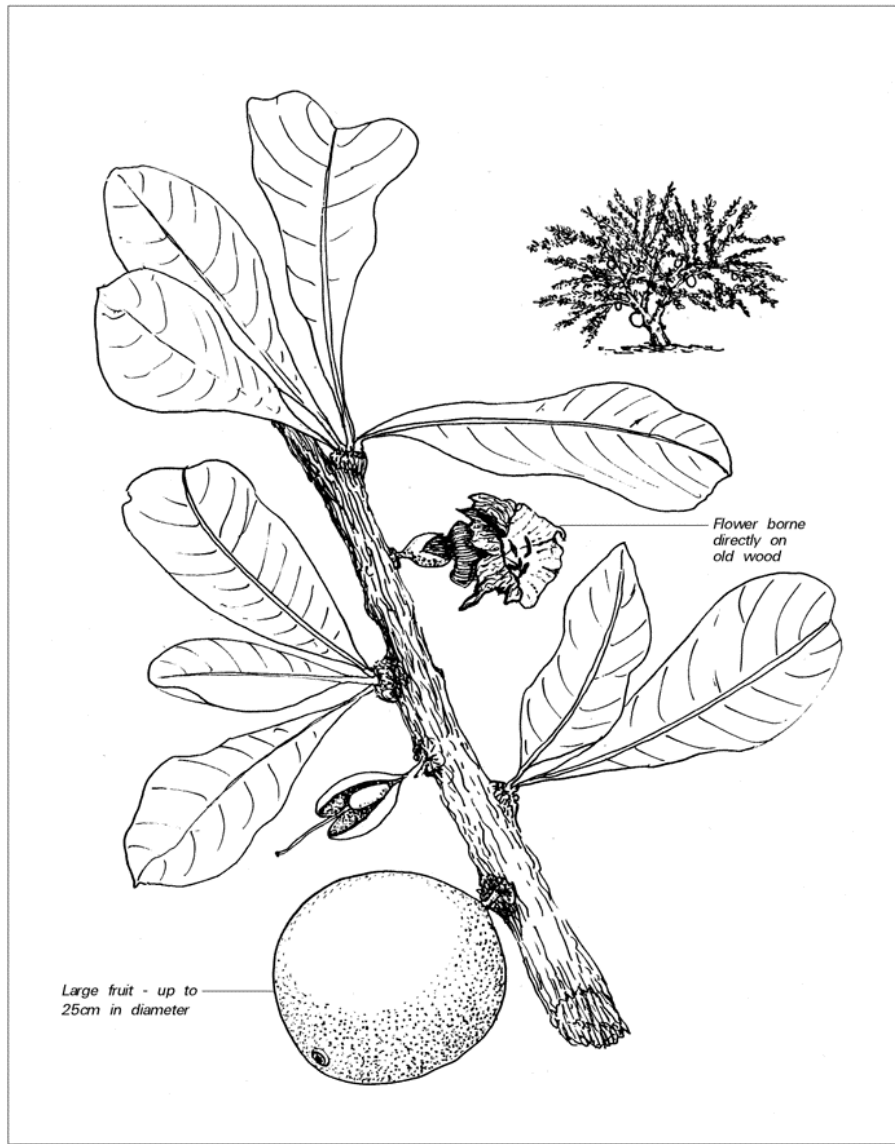
The trees flower and fruit from May to January. The greenish white to greenish yellow flowers are small (5-6 cm long), bell-shaped and occur singly or in clusters, directly on the trunk and branches. An interesting fact about them is that they are pollinated at night by nectar-sipping bats. The fruits which are ovoid or round and have a tough, watertight outer coat, measure up to 25 cm in diameter.

The pulp and seeds are removed from the fruits leaving the tough outer coat which is dried and used as bowls and gourds to carry water. Occasionally, the gourds are used as cooking pots and for making handbags and other ornaments. A gourd with a curved end is used as a pipe for smoking tobacco.



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Family: <b>Bignoniaceae</b>	Species: <i>Crescentia cujete</i>	Author: Linnaeus
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Height: 6-10m	Habitat: Sea level-800m	Persistence: Evergreen
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