



QUICK STICK

(*Gliricidia sepium*)

Quick stick is the name given to any tree whose branches, when cut and set in the ground as fence posts, take root and grow. In Jamaica it is most commonly applied to a useful tree, *Gliricidia sepium* which came from Central America.

The tree grows to a height of 6 m and can be found from sea-level to 900 m. The branches are long, and bear the leaves which alternate. The leaves may grow to 25 cm, each with 4-7 paired leaflets and one terminal one. The leaves are shed, often during or before flowering. In Jamaica this takes place between January and April, leaving the dense clusters of pink-mauvish blossoms.

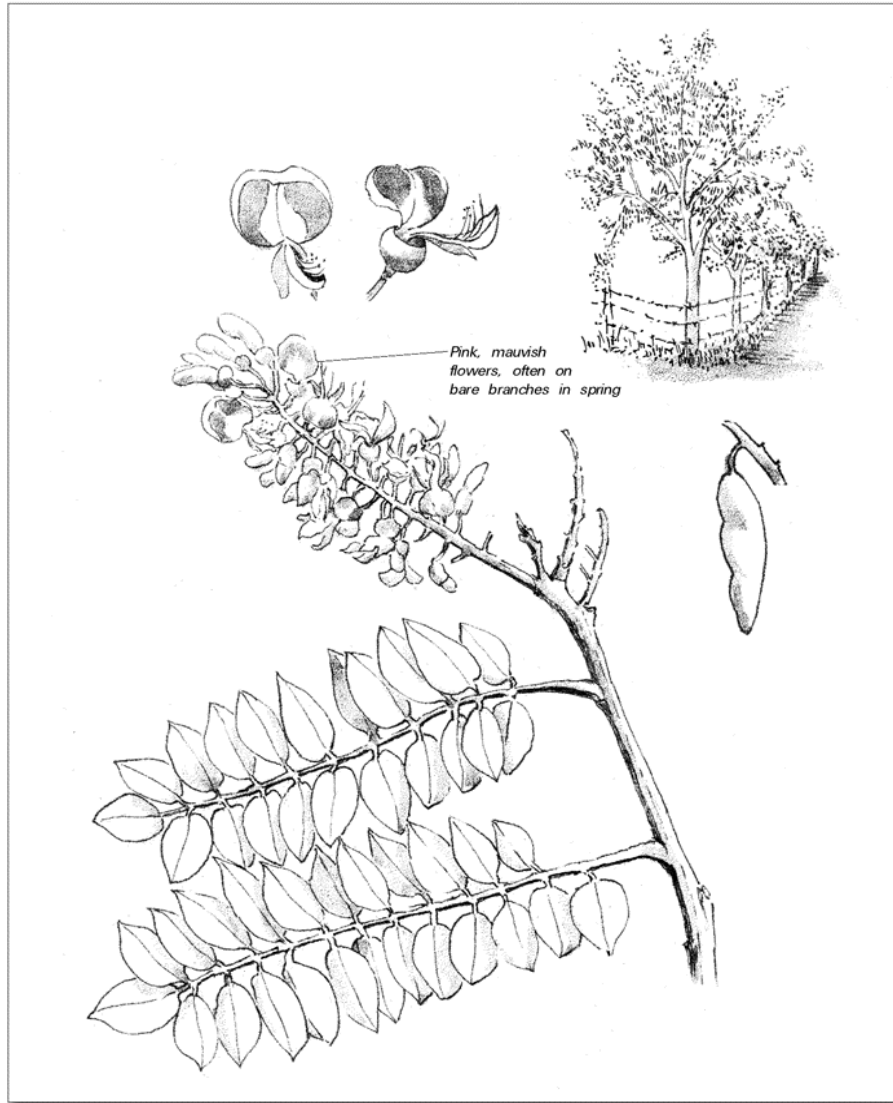
Each individual flower is like a sweet-pea flower, about 3 cm long. It has an upright petal, the standard, two wings and a keel which channels the stamens and style. The cluster of flowers contains many individuals. The seeds, each about 1 cm in length, grow like peas in a 10-12 cm pod.

This tree is a member of the pea family, and like others in the group it has nodules on its roots containing nitrogen-fixing bacteria. This helps to fertilise the soil. It is also useful as a shade tree and has a long history of use in shading cocoa and coffee. The leaves and seeds contain toxins used to poison rats.



QUICK STICK (*Gliricidia sepium*)

Family: Papilionaceae	Species: <i>Gliricidia sepium</i>	Author: (Jacq.) Kunth ex Griseb.
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Height: 6m	Habitat: Planted in fences and shade plant, sea level-1000m	Persistence: Deciduous
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