



TAMARIND

(*Tamarindus indica*)

Tamarind is said to be a native of tropical Africa but is found throughout the tropics. It grows in dry areas.

This tree is large, growing up to 27 m and sometimes having a girth of 1.6 m. The bark is brownish-grey and the characteristic light-green compound leaves distinguish it from most other trees. A leaf can be 7.5-10 cm long with about sixteen pairs of leaflets. These leaflets fold at nights as if to sleep.

The flowers which are seen from June to October are pale yellow marked with red. Hanging amidst the leaves from October to June are fruits which look like pods. The fruit is 7-15 cm long, light brown, cork-like and rough. The shape varies. The outer coat is crispy when the fruit is ripe. The seeds are reddish brown.

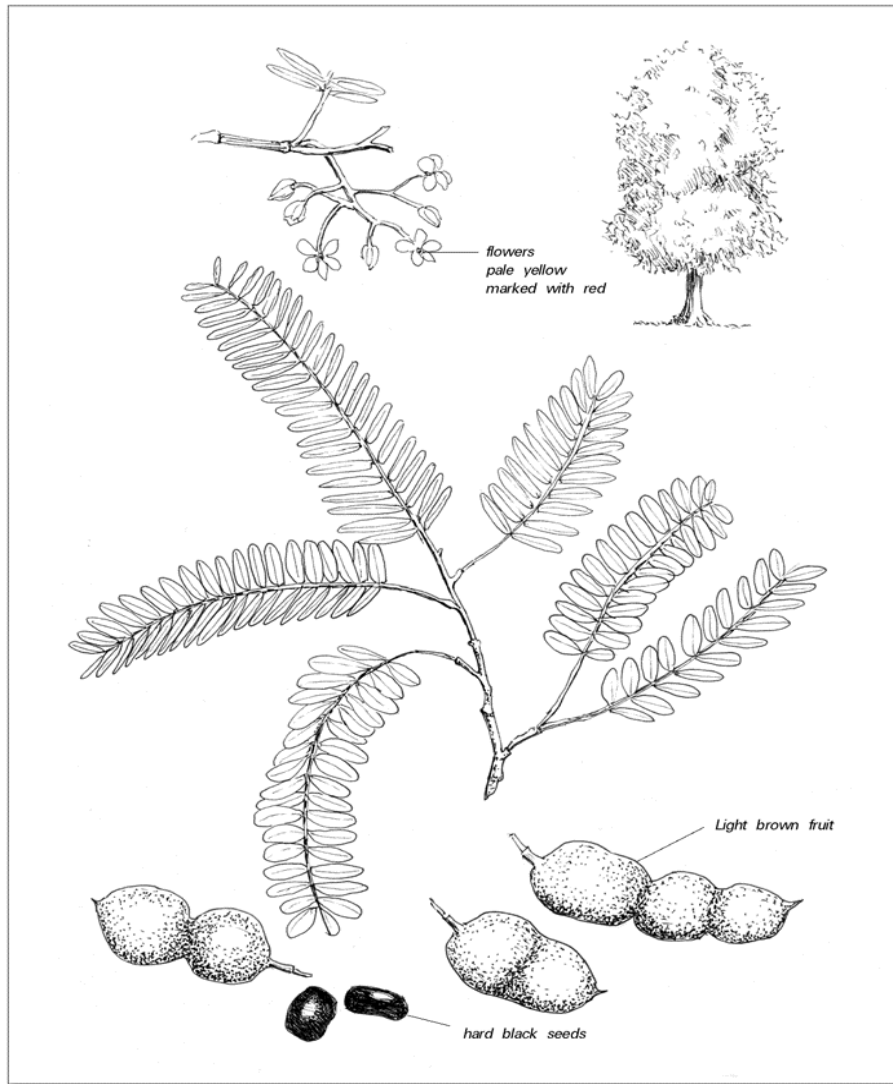
The fruit is eaten half ripe or ripe sometimes with salt sprinkled on it. The brown pulp, when separated from the seeds, makes a tasty drink when sugar, water and spices are added. Some persons add baking soda for extra zest. The fruit (including seeds) is added to sugar and made into balls to make a confectionery called tamarind balls. The seeds when strung together make necklaces and in rural Jamaica the seeds are used to play "jacks".

An unrelated tree, Wild Tamarind which has a similar leaf shape and size is found in woodlands. The fruit is however bright red.



TAMARIND (*Tamarindus indica*)

Family: Caesalpiniaceae	Species: <i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Author: Linnaeus
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Height: 27m	Habitat: Sea level-700m	Persistence: Evergreen
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