

10. *Diospyros bejaudii* Lecomte

Taxonomy and Commercial Grade

Cambodian name	: Angkat khmao
Scientific name	: <i>Diospyros bejaudii</i> Lecomte
Family	: Ebenaceae
Commercial grade-Cambodia	: Luxury

Distribution and Habitat: *Diospyros bejaudii* Lecomte is found in dense and semi-dense forests of Cambodia, where it is a narrow endemic (Dy Phon, 2000).

Gene-Ecological Zones: Coastal Cardamoms (A), Northern Cardamoms (B), Tonle Sap Floodplain (C), Northwestern Lowlands (D), Central Lowlands (d), Southern Annamites (g).

Botanical Description: *Diospyros bejaudii* Lecomte is a medium-sized, evergreen tree species from 10-20 m high. The white wood, with black pigmented heartwood, provides ebony in small proportions (Dy Phon, 2000).

Seed Collection: Seeds are usually collected from the tree or ground. In seed source areas, the ground is usually cleared and sometimes burnt to prepare for seed collection. To ease collection, a cover can be spread out on the ground. The optimal time of collection is reached when the fruits have changed in colour from green to brownish. Maturity can be confirmed by a cutting test.

Uses: This species is much in demand for the manufacture of knife handles, and often, musical instruments (Dy Phon, 2000).

Current Status: Because its wood has a high value, this species is over-exploited and in danger of extinction if adequate protection measures are not implemented. Its distribution is scattered and its habitat is destroyed through forestland conversion, selective illegal logging. The number of mature trees has been reduced significantly and it is now difficult to find significant sources of germplasm.

In 2002, the second CTSP meeting on the Forest Gene Conservation Strategy defined *Diospyros bejaudii* Lecomte as a priority species in need of immediate conservation intervention and appropriate protection. This species is protected by Cambodian Forestry Law No.35.

References:

- Cambodian Forestry Law No. 35, 25th June 1988
- FA, 2002 (draft), List of Trade Names of Commercial Wood in Cambodia, Trade Names of Commercial Wood
- Dy Phon, 2000, Dictionary of Plants used in Cambodia
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 1986, Decision No. 050 SSR.KSK: Wood Classification and Minimum Diameter for Allowable Cutting, 12th September

