

4. *Gardenia ankorensis* Pit

Taxonomy and Commercial Grade

Cambodian name : Dai Khla
Scientific name : *Gardenia ankorensis* Pit
Family : Rubiaceae
Commercial Grade-Cambodia : Luxury

Distribution and Habitat: Distributed in clear forests of Cambodia and Laos (Dy Phon, 2000). This is a light-demanding tree that is both fire and drought tolerant. The species can grow on degraded soils that are impacted by shifting cultivation, forest fire, infertile soil, and severe climates. It usually occurs solitarily among middle- or under-story trees (Khorn, 2002). In Cambodia, it is found in Stung Treng, Kratie, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, Oddar Meanchey and Kampong Speu, as noted in the map (see below).

Gene-Ecological Zones: Northern Cardamoms (B), Northwestern Lowlands (D), Central Lowlands (d).

Botanical Description: A shrub, 3-4 m tall according to Dy Phon (2000), a short tree to 10 m according to Heang Ponley (2002, per. comm.). The wood is durable and light-purple or blond in colour (Son Pisith, 2002, per.comm). Leaves are simple, and to 5 cm long and 3ccm wide (Heang Ponley, 2002, per. comm).



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 under the tree. The optimal time of collection is reached when the majority of the fruits have changed in colour from green to brownish. Maturity can be confirmed by a cutting test.

Uses: The wood of this species is used to make luxury furniture, cabinets, musical instruments, handicrafts, and in the preparation of seals and stamps (Dy Phon, 2000). An essence is extracted from the stalks and the leaves to be used as a diuretic (Dy Phon, 2000).

Current Status: Because the wood of this species is similar to ivory, it is very expensive and sold by the kilogramme (Sonn Pisith, 2002, per.comm). As a consequence, this species is over-exploited and in danger of extinction if adequate protection measures are not implemented. The distribution of the species is scattered, and most timber is harvested selectively from natural forest. The species is also succumbing to the conversion of riparian woodlands to agricultural lands. The number of mature trees has rapidly reduced, leading to difficulties in seed collection.

In 2002, the second CTSP meeting on the Forest Gene Conservation Strategy identified *Gardenia ankorensis* Pit as a priority species, and one that is in immediate need of conservation 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 The Cambodia, Trade Names of Commercial Wood, unpublished
- Dy Phon, 2000, Dictionary of Plants used in Cambodia.
- Heng Ponley, Director General of the Department of Traditional Medicinal Plants, Ministry of Health, 2002, per.comm.
- Khorn, S, 2002, Distribution of Selected Tree Species for Gene Conservation in Cambodia
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 1986, Decision No. 050 SSR.KSK: Wood Classification and Minimum Diameter for Allowable Cutting, 12th September.
- Son Pisith, 2002, pers. comm.
- CTSP Seminar, 29 Jan. 2002 on Forest Gene Conservation Strategy

