

## 18. *Sterculia lychnophora* Hance

### Taxonomy and Commercial Grade

Cambodian name	: Samraang
Scientific name	: <i>Sterculia lychnophora</i> Hance
Family	: Sterculiaceae
Commercial Grade-Cambodia	: Unclassified

**Distribution and Habitat:** A shade demanding species, this versatile tree grows in moist primary and secondary forests above 1700 m a.s.l. It often occurs as a solitary tree on limestone. In Cambodia, it is found in Ratanakiri, Kampot, Pursat and Sihanouk Ville (Khorn, 2002; see map).

**Gene-Ecological Zone:** Central Annamites (G).

**Botanical Description:** This is a large, evergreen broad-leaved tree species that can reach up to 18-25 m in height and produce boles from 50-75 cm in dbh. The wood is rather hard and heavy, but easy to saw and to work. Leaves are 12-15 cm long and 8-10 cm wide (Heang Ponley, 2002, per. comm.).



**Fruit and Seed Description:** The fruit is egg-shaped and from 8-15 mm in diameter. The colour of young fruit is green-yellow, turning to dark-brown when mature (Sonn Pisith, 2002, per. comm).

**Seed Collection:** Seeds are usually collected from the tree or from the ground after shaking or cutting the branches. 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 fruits have changed in colour from green to brownish. Maturity can be confirmed by a cutting test.

**Uses:** This species is usually used for house construction and interior furniture, construction of boats, and as firewood. The fruit is edible after soaking, and is in high demand in local and foreign markets for the manufacture of jellied fruits (Sonn Pisith, 2002, per.comm.).

**Current Status:** Samraang has been heavily exploited, and the trees only flower every 1-3 years (Sonn Pisith, 2002, per.comm.). Hence the number of mature trees is very low. It is often found in protected areas and conserved in some concession areas, but it is threatened by the destructive practice of chopping down the tree to collect the fruit.

In 2002, the second CTSP meeting on the Forest Gene Conservation Strategy defined *Sterculia lychnophora* Hance as a priority species in need of immediate conservation intervention and appropriate protection.

**References:**

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 1986, Decision No. 050 SSR.KSK: Wood Classification and Minimum Diameter for Allowable Cutting, 12<sup>th</sup> September
- FA, 2002 (Draft), List of Trade Names of Commercial Wood in Cambodia, Trade Names of Commercial Wood.
- Heang Ponley, Director General of Department of Traditional Medicinal Plants, Ministry of Health, 2002, pers. comm.
- Khorn, S, 2002, Distribution of Selected Tree Species for Gene Conservation in Cambodia
- Son Pisith, 2002, pers. comm.
- CTSP Seminar, 29 Jan. 2002 on Forest Gene Conservation Strategy

