

Zapatero



↑
max. 45 metres
∅
max. 1.7 metres

Occurrence

The region of origin extends from southern Mexico to the Amazon Basin of Brazil and Peru. The zapatero tree grows in tropical humid to very humid areas up to 900 m above sea level and prefers loamy-sandy soils, but also tolerates acidic and nutrient-poor soils.

Significance

The zapatero tree is one of the most resistant and hardest precious woods in Central America. Due to its resistance to salt water and high density, this wood is particularly popular in shipbuilding.

Threats

The tree is not endangered. The wood is resistant to pests such as termites and rot in damp soil.

At ForestFinance

The zapatero tree, also called shoemaker's tree, grows on our fincas in Panama in the regions of Veraguas, Chiriquí, Panama and Darién.

Characteristics



Leaves

Shortly before the green leaves fall to the ground they turn bright red.



Bark

The grey-brown bark is longitudinally cracked and peels off in thin layers. The inside is light pink to red.



Fruits

The 3-5 mm long, thin indehiscent fruits are particularly popular with monkeys and birds. The pulp of the green fruit turns purple during ripening. The fruits usually contain a small dark brown round seed.



Flowers

The paniced flowers are about 5 cm long. The delicate single green-white flowers are hardly visible on the tree.

Zapatero

FAMILY *PHYLLANTHACEAE*

GENUS *HIERONYMA*

SPECIES *HIERONYMA ALCHORNEOIDES*



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Description of wood

The sapwood has a light reddish colour. The heartwood is reddish-brown with a tendency to copper. Due to its high density, the wood is relatively hard and can be used in many ways. The tannin of the wood is used for the production of colour pigments and also in leather processing.



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DENSITY

0.77 g/cm³

JANKA HARDNESS

1700 lbf



Processing

The processing of the wood requires good machines and some skill. In addition to shipbuilding, the wood is used for supporting structures and railway sleepers due to its hardness and high density.



Use

In craftsmanship, the zapatero wood is appreciated for precision and turning work. Zapatero wood is used for ballpoint pens for example.



Seedlings

The seedlings are tended to in tree nurseries until they can be transplanted. The young leaves are particularly popular with leaf-cutting ants, which is why the seedlings require special care to protect them.



Zapatero is Spanish for shoemaker. The tree is further known as pilón, pantano or shoemaker's tree. It is sold under the commercial name bully tree wood.