

BARRINGTONIA ASIATICA (Linn.) Kurz

BOTONG

Mammea asiatica Linn.

Barringtonia speciosa Forst.

Agasta asiatica Miers

Butonica rumphina Miers

Local names: *Balubiton* (P.Bis.); *biton* (Bik.); *biton* (C. Bis.); *bituing* (Bis.); *boton* (Tag.); *botong* (Tag., Bik.); *botong-botong* (Bik.); *biton* (Bik., Chab.); *lugo* (Ibn.); *motong-botong* (Bik.); *vuton* (Iv.).

Botong is a characteristic strand plant found along the seashore throughout the Philippines. It is also met within tropical Asia to Polynesia.

This is a tree 8 to 15 meters height. The leaves are large, obovate or oblong-obovate, 0 to 40 centimeters long, entire, thick, shining, stalkless, blunt-tipped, and pointed at the base. The flowers are very large and white, and are borne in short, erect, few-flowered racemes. The calyx-tube is about 1 centimeter long; the lobes number 2 to 3 and are oblong-ovate, concave, green, and about 2.5 centimeters long. The petals are deciduous, four, thin, first white and then brownish, oblong, 7 to 8 centimeters long, and 3 to 4 centimeters wide. The stamens are very numerous, slender, united at the base 10 to 12 centimeters long, white below, and shading to purple above. The anthers are small and yellow. The fruit obovoid, 8 to 14 centimeters long and 8 to 12 centimeters thick, and contains a single large seed.

In the Philippines the tree is often cultivated for shade along boulevards and avenues by the sea. The fruit is used as a fish poison. Crevost and Petelot state that the fruit is also used as fish poison in Indo-China. Watt states that in the Moluccas oil is extracted from the seeds and is used as an illuminant. Burkill says that the pods are eaten in Indo-China.

Wehmer records that the seeds contain about 2.9 per cent of fixed oil, consisting of olein, palmitin, and stearin; gallic acid, 0.54 per cent; and a glucoside, barringtonin 3.271 per cent ($C_{18}H_{25}O_7OH_3$).

In the Philippines the leaves are heated and applied as topicals for stomachache. According to Guerrero, the fresh leaves are used in topicals for rheumatism. The seeds are employed as a vermifuge.