

Expanding Tree Diversity in Hawai'i's Landscapes:

Tanjong tree, Bullet Wood, Mimusops elengi

Introduction

If ever a tree were to be described as nondescript – meaning it has green leaves and looks like a tree – it might be the tanjong. It is a slow-growing, broad-leaved evergreen with a rounded crown when full grown, although young trees are pyramidal in shape. At maturity it can reach 60 ft with a spread of about 30 ft, but this takes many years. It is not a common tree in Hawai'i. Its hard, reddish wood has many uses beyond timber.

Recommended Use in Landscape

- Shade tree
- Street tree
- Residential use
- Parks

Distribution

• Native to Myanmar, India, Sri Lanka

Propagation Techniques

Seed

Cultural Requirements and Tolerances

- Normal well-drained soils
- Moderately tolerant to salinity
- Growth is slow in xeriscape settings
- Needs only occasional pruning

Flower and Fruit Characteristics

- The fragrant flowers are small, creamy white, star shaped, and arranged in clusters.
- Flowering occurs in the spring.
- Fruits are oval, pointed, about 1 to 1½ inches long. The flesh is red-orange at maturity. It is edible, though astringent.
- Each fruit contains one or two seeds.

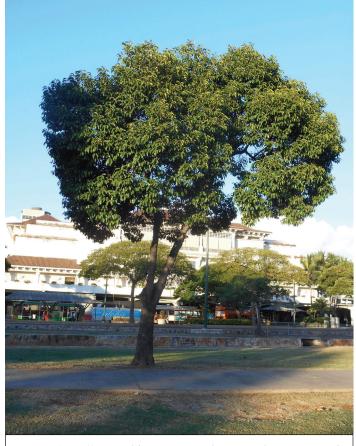


Figure 1. A 50-year old Mimusops elengi in Ala Moana Park

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Leaf Characteristics

- Leaves are thick, oval, dark green, up to 5 inches long and 2 inches wide. The leaf margin is somewhat wavy.
- Leaf arrangement is alternate.

Advantages for Use in Landscapes

- Dense crown
- Flowers can be used in lei but many are required
- Can be pruned to many forms
- Not rated for invasiveness, but unlikely to be invasive due to its slow growth

Disadvantages for Use in Landscapes

- Slow-growing
- The heavy crop of fruits can contribute numerous lumpy seeds, so the tree should not be planted over a sidewalk.



Figure 4. Fruit of the Mimusops elengi



Figure 2. Young fruit and foliage of the Mimusops elengi

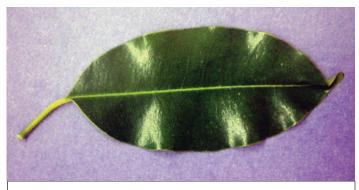


Figure 3. Leaf of the Mimusops elengi



Figure 5. Fragrant flowers appear in late spring

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