

## Scientific Name:

*Pongamia pinnata*

## Common Name:

- Pongam Tree
- Karanja
- Honge

## Distinct Features:

- **Growth:** A medium to large-sized deciduous tree that typically grows to a height of 15-25 meters. It has a spreading crown and a stout trunk.
- **Leaves:** The leaves are compound and pinnate, consisting of 5-7 leaflets that are glossy, dark green, and oblong, measuring about 10-15 cm long. The leaflets are arranged in pairs, creating a feathery appearance.
- **Flowers:** The flowers are fragrant, pea-like, and typically white or pale pink with purple markings, growing in clusters. Each flower measures about 1-2 cm long and blooms in the summer.
- **Fruits:** The fruit is a flat, woody pod that is about 5-8 cm long and contains 1-3 seeds. The pods turn brown as they mature and are often retained on the tree for a long time.
- **Bark:** The bark is rough and grayish-brown, with a slightly fissured texture as the tree matures.

## Cultural Importance:

- *Pongamia pinnata* is often used in traditional medicine and has cultural significance in various regions of India and Southeast Asia. The tree is associated with sustainability, as it is used for biofuel production due to its oil-rich seeds.
- In many cultures, the tree is also planted for its shade and beauty, often found along roadsides and in parks.

## Uses:

- **Culinary:**
  - In some regions, the seeds are processed and used in cooking, although caution is advised as they may be toxic when raw.
- **Medicinal:**
  - Traditional medicine utilizes various parts of the tree for treating skin diseases, joint pain, and digestive issues. The oil extracted from the seeds has anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Aromatic:**
  - The flowers are used in traditional garlands and have a pleasant fragrance.

- **Environmental:**
  - The tree is often used in reforestation and agroforestry projects due to its ability to improve soil quality and provide shade. It is also a good source of biofuel from its seeds.

### **Picture Description:**

- **Whole Tree:** A medium to large-sized deciduous tree with a stout trunk and a spreading crown, providing ample shade.
- **Leaves:** Compound pinnate leaves with 5-7 glossy, dark green leaflets that are oblong and feathery in appearance.
- **Flower:** Fragrant, pea-like flowers that are typically white or pale pink with purple markings, blooming in clusters during the summer.
- **Fruit:** Flat, woody pods that are about 5-8 cm long, containing 1-3 seeds, turning brown as they mature.
- **Bark:** Rough, grayish-brown bark with a slightly fissured texture as the tree matures.

