

HIMBABAO



Scientific Name: *Alleaenthus luzonicus*
(Blanco) F. Vill.

Local Names: Alukon, Himbabao, Malambingin, Babayan (Tagalog);
Balong-kadios (Bisaya)

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

Himbabao is a medium-sized shed tree with a height of 15 m and a trunk diameter of 30 cm. The leaves are alternate with pointed apex and rounded base. The lower leaf surface is hairy. The flowers are very small and are borne on very long, slender, spike-like flowering branches. Pistillate and staminate inflorescences are borne on separate plants.

ADAPTABILITY AND AVAILABILITY

Himbabao is widely grown throughout the Philippines. It is commonly found in thickets and second-growth forests at low and medium altitudes, and also in the dipterocarp forest of Mt. Makiling, Laguna.

USES/IMPORTANCE

The part of alukon or himbabao that is used as food is the flower spikes. It is used in meat and vegetable recipes such as pinakbet, bulanglang, and stir-fries.

The wood of himbabao is used for paneling, furniture and cabinet work, gunstocks, musical instruments, butchers' blocks and boat planking.

Himbabao trees have been planted in Southern Luzon to shade abaca plants. The fibrous bark yields (inferior) rope.

NUTRIENT VALUE

The himbabao flower (100 g) contains water (86.8 g); energy (52 kcal); protein (2.9 g); fat (0.9 g); carbohydrate (8.1 g); fiber (1.5 g); ash (1.3 g); Ca (278 mg); P (75 mg); Fe (4.3 mg); carotene (300 ug); vitamin A (50 ug); and thiamin (0.06 mg).

PROPAGATION

Himbabao is generally propagated by seeds, or by cuttings from the mature branches with approximately 8 cm of diameter.

HARVESTING

Branches that bear the flowers are cut from the tree before harvesting the flowers. Subsequently, the tree is able to grow new branches for the next flowering season.

PROSPECTS/OPPORTUNITIES

With the potential of himbabao as food, research should focus on its propagation and utilization.