

Gyrocarpus americanus Jacq.

Mafay – *G. jacquini* Gaertner, *G. asiaticus* Jacq., *G. asiaticus* Willd

Widely distributed tree in the sub-arid forests and thickets of western Madagascar.



Description

Stature: small crown with limited branching.

Size: medium-size tree to 20 m and stem diameter to 80 cm.

Bark: smooth, greyish-greenish.

Inner bark, when cut, exudes an abundant clear yellow liquid.

Leaves: alternate and clumped at the end of shoots. Long petiole. Smelly when crushed.

Flower: mainly male or bisexual, yellowish flowers arranged in axillary cymes.

Fruit: dry drupe topped by two erect, long narrow wings (to 10 cm long).

Seed: blackish 15 x 10 mm.

Hernandiaceae

Striking features

- small crown with limited branching.

- dry drupe with two long apical wings.



Ecology

Status and distribution: Pan-tropical species (sometimes split into 3 separate taxa) with 10 recognized sub-species including three in Madagascar. In Kirindy the leaves are glabrous and unlobed and belong to subsp. *glaber*. Present along most of the western domain.

Habitat requirements: light-demanding on well-drained sandy soils.

Phenology: deciduous. Flowering: August-November. Fruiting: late October to early December.

Kirindy: yearly increment growth 25 to 55 cm.

Reproduction: wind-dispersed.



Uses

Widely used. Wood not durable and susceptible to termites and fungus.

Used to make canoes.

Sources and further information

General: Blaser *et al.* (1993) p 32.

Botanical description: Abraham (1991) p 57, Schatz (2005) p 212.

Forestry: Grisa (1987)

Kirindy: Anon. (1993) no. 447.

Herbarium specimen:

