

## Acrocarpus fraxinifolius – Pink Cedar

*Acrocarpus fraxinifolius*, commonly known as Pink Cedar is a stately deciduous tree, attaining heights of 30-60m that is found naturally in southern Asia from India south to Indonesia. In Thailand, it occurs in evergreen gallery forest and is more frequent in India and Myanmar.

It features a cylindrical stem, free of branches for up to 75% of its total height. Even above its massive plank buttresses, it can achieve a diameter of over 200 cm. The branches remain relatively thin and are horizontally deployed. Bark is thin and light grey in colour. Although a legume, it apparently does not have nitrogen-fixing nodules. It is deep rooting, sometimes up to 4.5m into the soil.

It has bipinnately compound leaves with 5 to 6 pairs of dark green 7.5cm oblong leaflets that are a bright reddish pink color when first emerging, then a pinkish yellow and finally a lime green color before maturing giving the tree a multicolored look at the branch tips much of the Spring and Summer. In the early Spring, just before or as the tree first leafs out, the many scarlet red flowers appear - in 7.5 - 15cm long dense axillary racemes near the branch tips.

It is multi-use species. The foliage can be used as fodder, is a good source of nectar and a good bee forage. The wood is used for firewood in many places. The sapwood is whitish; the heartwood is bright to brownish-red with darker veins, making it very decorative. The wood is not very durable and is prone to attack by fungi and insects, but it impregnates well. It is heavy, moderately hard, and compact and is easy to work with tools and is well suited for turnery, carving and polishing. The wood is used for interior trim, panelling, furniture and cabinet work. Within its native range it is also used for shingles, general construction, floors, stairways, doors, tea crates, beehive frames, and after being impregnated, for railway ties. Gum or resin: the wood exudes a gumlike resin when the trees are felled.

*Acrocarpus fraxinifolius* grows best in submontane areas in the humid and sub-humid tropics with a short, dry spell. It is a pioneer and demands light and regenerates primarily in small, burnt areas, on open patches where fresh soil has been exposed and along newly constructed roads although it can tolerate slight shade when young. It is most suitable for moderate altitudes and a moist climate, but it can tolerate slight shade when young. It is very sensitive to frost.

It grows best in well drained, clayey loam soils with a soil pH of 4-7 and also thrives in shallow and compacted soils.

### Propagation

Pink Cedar is propagated by seed which should be pretreated with sulphuric acid for 10 min or with hot water and left to soak for 24 hours before being sown in a shaded bed. A germination of 80-95% within only 2-7 days can be achieved after this pretreatment. It is a very fast-growing tree with seedlings ready for planting out when 3 months old and 30-45 cm tall.