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### ECONOMIC PLANTS OF ST. JOHN, U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

BY

ROBERT H. WOODWORTH

(*Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont*)

THE ISLAND OF ST. JOHN presents a truly virgin appearance, being forested from the hilltops to the water's edge. A century ago practically the whole island was under cultivation, sugar cane being the main crop. After 1848, when slavery was abolished, the cultivation of the island's very poor soil was no longer profitable. As the forests slowly covered the hillsides the population gradually dropped from twenty-five hundred to less than one-third that number.

Among the few remaining signs of this earlier activity are the ruins of the sugar estates, and even these are, for the most part, overgrown with vines and trees.

Most sections of the island are accessible by trails which wind over the mountains, along the shores and through the dense vegetation of the deep valleys. There are no roads. The island is free from the "improvements of modern civilization" and interestingly enough has no urgent economic problems. It is not intended to imply that the natives would not profit by a better diet, but this is just as true of people everywhere. A large majority of the St. John folk have never been off their island. The natives have less than the people of nearby islands and

live more simply ; possibly because they are isolated from the common causes of discontent they are happier and more independent. Their diet consists of corn meal, fish (the nearby waters comprise some of the finest fishing grounds), meat from a few domestic animals, produce from small gardens, and certain wild plants.

#### FOOD PLANTS

***Panicum maximum* Jacquin.** Gramineae.

GUINEA GRASS.

This tall African grass is grown for forage. It is one of the favorite foods of horses and cattle.

***Smilax coriacea* Sprengel.** Liliaceae.

BELL APPLE.

Children eat the yellow fruit. (See also medicinal plants).

***Cocos nucifera* Linnaeus.** Palmae.

WATERNUT.

The liquid endosperm (i.e. water) of the green unripe fruit is drunk and the gelatinous endosperm is eaten. This is an important part of the diet. The hard white endosperm of the ripe coconut is considered unfit for human consumption but is fed to hogs.

***Piper Amalago* Linnaeus.** Piperaceae.

BLACK WATTLE, CRAB WOOD.

The leaves are dried and used for making tea. This species is also mentioned under medicinal plants, and plants providing wood.

***Coccoloba uvifera* Linnaeus.** Polygonaceae.

SEA GRAPE.

The fruits are eaten raw or made into an excellent jam. There is not much flesh around the large seed. The heavy crop ripens progressively during several months.



**Boerhaavia erecta** *Linnaeus*. Nyctaginaceae.

BATA-BATA.

The succulent leaves of this spreading herb are used for spinach. They are one of the constituents of the dish called *calalou*.

**Petiveria alliacea** *Linnaeus*. Phytolaccaceae.

CONGA ROOT.

Although the specific name suggests the odor of this plant, the leaves are sometimes dried for tea by the natives.

**Annona muricata** *Linnaeus*. Annonaceae.

SOURSOP.

The fruit is used in making sherbet.

**Annona glabra** *Linnaeus*. Annonaceae.

BONYA, DOG APPLE.

This fruit is eaten even though it is not esteemed as highly as that of other members of the genus. (See also under wood).

**Annona squamosa** *Linnaeus*. Annonaceae.

SUGAR APPLE.

The fruit of this small tree is common and much appreciated.

**Leucaena glauca** (*L.*) *Bentham*. Leguminosae.

WILD TAMARIND.

Horses feed on the leaves of this shrub when guinea grass gets old and unpalatable. If they get little else in their diet the hair of the tail and mane falls out, possibly because of some poison or because of some dietary deficiency. When the diet changes hair grows in again. This plant also provides wood.

**Cassia occidentalis** *Linnaeus*. Leguminosae.

STINKING WEED.

The seeds are parched, ground and brewed for a beverage like coffee.

**Inga laurina** (Sw.) Willdenow. Leguminosae.

SWEET PEAS.

The long horizontal lenticels and the light bark give this tree the appearance of our northern birches. Children eat the seeds.

**Centrosema virginianum** (L.) Benth. Leguminosae.

BLUE WISS.

This is one of the favorite foods of horses. They will cover a great deal of territory selecting these diminutive vines while ignoring abundant stands of guinea grass. This is also a fiber plant.

**Gliricidia sepium** (Jacq.) Steudel. Leguminosae.

MADRE DE CACAO.

This tree can be used to provide a valuable cattle food. The small branches are cut into pieces containing several nodes. These are placed in rows in the ground. They grow quickly, developing an abundance of herbage which is high in protein content. The cattle are turned in to feed until the growth is stripped, then it is allowed to grow out again.

**Tamarindus indica** Linnaeus. Leguminosae.

TAMARIND.

The young pods are made into jam. They are first soaked in water which is thrown away. Then they are boiled, and preserved in a syrup.

**Phyllanthus acidus** (L.) Skeels. (*Cicca disticha* L.). Euphorbiaceae.

GOOSEBERRY.

The berries are made into jam or eaten fresh. (See also under wood plants).

**Spondias Mombin** *Linnaeus*. Anacardiaceae.

PLUM.

The fruit is fed to hogs, although in other localities it is esteemed for human consumption. (See also under wood).

**Melicocca bijuga** *Linnaeus*. Sapindaceae.

CANIP, KNIP, GUINIP.

This well known fruit tree of the warmer regions is common on St. John. It bears an abundance of fruit which is relished by the natives and visitors.

**Corchorus siliquosus** *Linnaeus*. Tiliaceae.

PAPA LOLA.

The leaves are frequently used for spinach. They are one of the ingredients of the dish called *calalou*.

**Terminalia Catappa** *Linnaeus*. Combretaceae.

ALMOND.

Both the fleshy outer part of the fruit and the oily seed are eaten. (See also under ornamental plants).

**Psidium amplexicaule** *Persoon*. Myrtaceae.

SPICE GUAVA.

When cut, the wood smells like Hubbard Squash. The fruit is eaten.

**Eugenia ligustrina** *Willdenow*. Myrtaceae.

CRUMBERRY.

The berries are used in making jam and in the preparation of a rum similar to guava-berry rum.

**Eugenia procera** *Poiret*. Myrtaceae.

GUAVA-BERRY.



This is the plant which several generations ago provided the fruits for the famous guava-berry rum of the locality. Quite recently an attempt was again made to produce this drink commercially. Several barrels of guava-berries were shipped to Denmark, but this was just previous to the German occupation and nothing has been heard of the shipment. Individuals still make guava-berry rum for their own use, particularly at the holiday season.

***Cordia glabra* Linnaeus.** Boraginaceae.

MANJACK.

The fruit of this tree is fed to hogs. (See also under wood).

***Tournefortia hirsutissima* Linnaeus.** Boraginaceae.

GINIPER, CHICKENET.

When the leaves are dried they make an excellent tea.

***Cordia nitida* Vahl.** Boraginaceae.

BASTARD MANJACK.

The fruits are gathered and fed to hogs.

***Ocimum micranthum* Willdenow.** Labiatae.

ROCK BALSAM.

The dried fragrant leaves are used for tea.

***Solanum polygamum* Vahl.** Solanaceae.

PARKA, COCCULARKA.

The leaves of this shrub are interesting in that there are upright spines from the midrib. Children eat the berries.

#### PLANTS USED FOR FISH BAIT

***Annona muricata* Linnaeus.** Annonaceae.

SOURSOP.

The fruit is an excellent bait for use in fish pots. It is also edible.

**Pachycereus marginatus** (*DC.*) *Britton & Rose*.  
Cactaceae.

DIDDLEDOO.

This is the Organ Pipe Cactus. The green rind is peeled off and the inside of the young stems is used for fish pot bait.

**Morinda citrifolia** *Linnaeus*. Rubiaceae.

PAINKILLER.

Pieces of the large fruit are used for bait in fish pots. This is also a medicinal plant.

#### POISONOUS PLANTS

**Piscidia piscipula** (*L.*) *Sargent*. Leguminosae.

DOGWOOD.

Leaves and twigs are broken up and scattered on the water. Fish feed on these bits and are quickly poisoned and easily caught.

**Malpighia infestissima** (*Juss.*) *Richard*. Malpighiaceae.

MAD DOG, TOUCH-ME-NOT.

Common on dry, exposed slopes. The leaves and young stems are covered with large needle-like hairs which penetrate the skin causing painful dermatitis.

**Asclepias curassavica** *Linnaeus*. Asclepiadaceae.

PETIE GUANA.

It is said that this plant will cause the death of any animal which eats it and that it is more poisonous at certain seasons than at others.

## MEDICINAL PLANTS

### **Smilax coriacea** *Sprengel*. Liliaceae.

#### BELL APPLE.

The vegetative parts of the plant are brewed to provide an abortifacient. I am told that this would only be used when it was considered extremely dangerous for the mother to continue in pregnancy. Ordinarily pregnancy is to be encouraged since the population of St. John has been regularly declining. Possibly a deficient diet renders pregnancy difficult.

Mild doses of this tea are used to rid children of worms. (See also under food plants).

### **Piper Amalago** *Linnaeus*. Piperaceae.

#### BLACK WATTLE.

The green leaves are brewed to provide a remedy for coughs. The dried leaves are used in the preparation of a beverage tea. (See also under wood).

### **Phthirusa caribaea** (*Krug & Urban*) *Engler*. Loranthaceae.

#### BASS AND BOOM.

The leaves of this mistletoe are boiled for a brew which is drunk to relieve strains caused by lifting heavy loads.

### **Bryophyllum pinnatum** (*L.*) *Kurz*. Crassulaceae.

#### CLAPPER BUSH, GREEN LOVE, AIR PLANT.

The leaves are steeped and the brew drunk to relieve pain in the kidneys.

### **Cassia occidentalis** *Linnaeus*. Leguminosae.

#### STINKING WEED.

The root is boiled and the brew drunk for aiding appetite or for treating cramps. (See also under food).



**Pithecellobium Saman** (*Willd.*) *Benth.* Leguminosae.

RAIN TREE, KINDLY TREE, FRIENDLY TREE, LICORICE, SAMAN.

The seeds are chewed for sore throat; an elixir prepared from them is also used.

**Andira inermis** *Humboldt, Bonpland & Kunth.*  
Leguminosae.

PIGTURD, HUNKLUT (from an old creole name). Both of these common names refer to the appearance of the seeds on the ground.

The bark and seeds are used to prepare a purging brew which must be used with care because it is poisonous in large doses. (See also under wood).

**Galactia dubia** *De Candolle.* Leguminosae.

IRON WEED.

A tea from the leaves is used for relieving pain in the back caused by overexertion. It is practically impossible to pull the root system of this plant out of the ground. For this reason it is suggested that the medicinal use is in accord with the doctrine of signatures.

**Jatropha gossypifolia** *Linnaeus.* Euphorbiaceae.

PHYSIC NUT.

The leaves are boiled and the brew drunk for a mild physic. The brew is also used to wash sores and ulcers.

**Phyllanthus Niruri** *Linnaeus.* Euphorbiaceae.

CANE PEAS SENNA.

A common weed in the West Indies and tropical America.

The whole plant is brewed and the liquor boiled down. Some of this extremely bitter liquor is drunk each morning, for several days, in cases of malaria and dengue fever.

This remedy is very highly thought of by the natives. If it is as effective as they claim, it might well serve as a substitute for quinine.

The fifth edition of Merck's Index refers to an extract ( $C_{30}H_{37}O_8$ ) from the leaves of this plant which is said to poison fish. It does not have characters of a glucoside. This may or may not be the effective principle.

**Canella Winterana** (L.) Gaertner. Canellaceae.

PEPPER CINNAMON.

The thick leaves, which contain many oil glands, are boiled and the liquor is used as a drink and to bathe the whole body in cases of grippe or "cold all over the body." This treatment makes the individual sweat profusely.

**Xanthoxylum flavum** Vahl. Rutaceae.

YELLOW SANDALWOOD.

An extract from the bark of the trunk and roots has been used as a tonic. (See also under wood).

**Melochia nodiflora** Swartz. Bombacaceae.

BLACK MARSHMALLOW.

This very common plant is pounded, mixed with salt and vinegar and put on cuts and sprains.

**Rauwolfia Lamarckii** A. De Candolle. Apocynaceae.

BITTER BUSH, BELLYACHE.

The leaves are boiled and the brew drunk to aid in elimination of the afterbirth following parturition.

**Cuscuta americana** Linnaeus. Convolvulaceae.

YELLOW LOVE.

This plant, together with the leaves of yellow cedar (see below), is brewed for a "fever tea" which is much used.



**Heliotropium angiospermum** *Murray*. Boraginaceae.

EYEBRIGHT.

The plant is boiled and the brew used to bathe irritated eyes.

**Scoparia dulcis** *Linnaeus*. Scrophulariaceae.

TEETH BUSH.

The whole top of the plant is boiled and the brew applied to gums when children are cutting teeth.

**Tecoma stans** (*L.*) *Humboldt, Bonpland & Kunth*. Bignoniaceae.

YELLOW CEDAR, GINGER THOMAS.

The leaves, together with the dodder (*Cuscuta americana* L.) mentioned above, are brewed for a "fever tea."

**Crescentia Cujete** *Linnaeus*. Bignoniaceae.

CALABASH, GOURD TREE.

The fruit-pulp is boiled and the thick liquor taken for respiratory troubles. (See also under miscellaneous economic plants).

**Bontia daphnoides** *Linnaeus*. Myoporaceae.

BUTTONWOOD.

The leaves are steeped and the brew administered to people who are suffering from fish poisoning. The whole problem of poisoning from fish is a serious one for these folk: whether it is caused by fish which have been dead too long for safe consumption (no ice is available) or by fish which are poisonous even if eaten immediately after being caught. It is reported that there are as many as forty deaths a year due to fish poisoning on the nearby island of Tortola alone.

**Morinda citrifolia** *Linnaeus*. Rubiaceae.

PAINKILLER.



The leaves of this common shrub are brewed to provide a liquor which is applied externally to relieve pain. Also pieces of the large fruit are heated and put on sores or inflamed regions. (See also under bait).

#### PLANTS WHICH PROVIDE ESSENTIAL OILS

**Pimenta racemosa** (Mill.) J.W. Moore. (*Amomis caryophyllata* (Jacq.) Krug & Urban). Myrtaceae.

##### BAY TREE.

Oil of bay is distilled from the leaves. Plantations of this tree are on the mountains at the eastern part of St. John. Although the shape of the bay tree is naturally beautiful, the regular harvesting causes stunted and compact growth. There is a striking variation in the quality of the essential oil from individual trees. This is so pronounced that certain specimens are considered by the natives to be closely related but not the true bay. No attempts have been made to select high quality and high yielding trees for propagation.

Virgin Island bay rum is compounded in St. Thomas from the essential oil of St. John. Only five per cent of bay rum imports into the United States have this origin. Better distilling methods and better care of the trees would increase the yield of bay oil. The industry has never been considered important enough to carry on genetic and propagation studies with a view to improving quality and yield.

**Coleus amboinicus** Loureiro. Labiatae.

##### WILD THYME.

Very strongly aromatic. In other parts of the American tropics this is called Spanish Thyme and is commonly seen in the markets.

## DYE PLANT

**Genipa americana** *Linnaeus*. Rubiaceae.

RAT APPLE.

This tree which is so well known in the American tropics for its excellent wood is not common enough on St. John to be so used. The astringent pulpy interior of the unripe fruit when macerated yields a blue black dye. Although the pulp of the ripe fruit is eaten by many people, the natives of St. John do not eat it.

## PLANTS USED AS SOAP

**Sansevieria zeylanica** *Willdenow*. Liliaceae.

LIZARD'S TAIL.

The leaves are crushed in water and are then used for washing and bleaching clothing.

**Passiflora suberosa** *Linnaeus*. Passifloraceae.

INK BERRY.

The crushed plant is said to make lather in water, while the crushed berry provides a natural "bluing." Both of these substances are used in washing clothing.

## PLANTS USED FOR THEIR WOOD

**Piper Amalago** *Linnaeus*. Piperaceae.

BLACK WATTLE.

The stems are utilized in building small shelters or shacks much as bamboo is used.

**Cecropia peltata** *Linnaeus*. Moraceae.

TRUMPET WOOD.

The trunks, which have hollow internodes, are used for fish pot buoys.

**Ficus laevigata** *Vahl*. Moraceae.

MILK TREE.

The wood is used for charcoal.

**Coccoloba uvifera** *Linnaeus*. Polygonaceae.

SEA GRAPE.

The wood is used for boat timbers and for charcoal. (See also under food plants).

**Trichostigma octandrum** (*L.*) *H. Walter*. Phytolaccaceae.

BLACK HOOPWOOD.

The wood of this vine is peeled and used for the frames of baskets.

**Annona glabra** *Linnaeus*. Annonaceae.

BONYA, DOG APPLE.

The wood is used for heavy timbers. It is also in demand as fuel by the bake shops. It is sold by weight.

**Capparis indica** (*L.*) *Fawcett & Rendle*. Capparidaceae.

BLACK WITTY.

The wood is light, but very strong. It is used for axe handles and is split into long thin pieces for the frames of fish pots.

**Hymenaea Courbaril** *Linnaeus*. Leguminosae.

LOCUST.

The wood is used for furniture and charcoal.

**Tamarindus indica** *Linnaeus*. Leguminosae.

TAMARIND.

The wood makes good charcoal. (See also under food plants).

**Inga laurina** (*Sw.*) *Willdenow*. Leguminosae.

SWEET PEAS.

The wood is split into long thin strips for the frames of fish pots.



**Acacia muricata** (*L.*) *Sargent.* Leguminosae.

DOGWOOD.

The wood is used for fence posts and is split for fish pot braces. It also makes fair charcoal.

**Andira inermis** *Humboldt, Bonpland & Kunth.*  
Leguminosae.

PIGTURD, HUNKLUT.

The wood is used in furniture making. (See also under medicinal plants).

**Albizzia Lebbeck** (*L.*) *Bentham.* Leguminosae.

TIPID, WOMAN'S TONGUES. (The latter common name is applied because the flat, paper-thin legume pods rustle in the slightest breeze and are said to be "whispering all the time").

The wood is excellent for furniture construction and makes a good grade of charcoal.

**Leucaena glauca** (*L.*) *Bentham.* Leguminosae.

WILD TAMARIND.

The wood is used for making charcoal. (See also under food plants).

**Erythrina Corallodendrum** *Linnaeus.* Leguminosae.

BOMBATEL.

The wood is used in making charcoal.

**Erythroxylon brevipes** *De Candolle.* Erythroxylaceae.

BRIZLETT.

This tree provides one of the very best fence post woods. It commands a higher price than all other fence post woods except Black Torch.

**Amyris elemifera** *Linnaeus.* Rutaceae.

WHITE TORCH.

The wood gives a spicy and peppery odor when cut or sawed. It is a good wood for fence posts.

**Xanthoxylum martinicense** (*Lam.*) *De Candolle*.  
Rutaceae.

YELLOW PRICKLE.

This wood is used in building construction and in furniture making.

**Xanthoxylum flavum** *Vahl*. Rutaceae.

YELLOW SANDALWOOD.

This is the West Indian Satinwood of commerce. The wood is hard and much in demand for fine furniture and novelty manufacture.

**Bursera Simaruba** (*L.*) *Sargent*. Burseraceae.

TURPENTINE.

This tree is called Gumbo Limbo in Florida and Cuba, and West Indian Birch in the British West Indies. The wood is used for fence posts. Pieces put in the ground just after cutting will take root and form a living hedge-row.

**Stigmaphyllon lingulatum** (*Poir.*) *Small*. Malpighiaceae.

RED WISS.

The wood is used for the braces on fish pots.

**Phyllanthus acidus** (*L.*) *Skeels* (*Cicca disticha* *L.*)  
Euphorbiaceae.

GOOSEBERRY.

The wood is used for charcoal. (See also under food plants).

**Gymnanthes lucida** *Swartz*. Euphorbiaceae.

GOATWOOD.

The hard black heartwood of this small tree is highly prized for making walking sticks.

**Spondias Mombin** *Linnaeus*. Anacardiaceae.

PLUM.

When small trees or branches from larger trees are used for fence posts they take root and grow, providing a living hedgerow.

**Schaefferia frutescens** *Jacquin*. Celastraceae.

BOXWOOD.

The wood is used for fence posts and charcoal.

**Maytenus sp.** Celastraceae.

BUFLAMMAR.

The wood is used for charcoal and fence posts.

**Serjania polyphylla** (*L.*) *Radlkofer*. Sapindaceae.

BLACK WISS.

The wood is split into long thin pieces and used for the framing in fish pots.

**Melicocca bijuga** *Linnaeus*. Sapindaceae.

GUINIP, CANIP, KNIP.

The wood is split into long thin pieces for the frames of fish pots.

**Krugiodendron ferreum** (*Vahl*) *Urban*. Rhamnaceae.

EBONY.

This is one of the heaviest woods. It is used for fence posts.

**Guazuma ulmifolia** *Lamarck*. Sterculiaceae.

JACKOCALALOO.

The tough, strong wood of this tree is used for masts and booms on sloops and the handles of oars. Oar blades are made of lighter wood and are spliced onto the handles.



**Rhizophora Mangle** *Linnaeus*. Rhizophoraceae.

MANGROVE.

The wood is used for charcoal and for light construction.

**Psidium amplexicaule** *Persoon*. Myrtaceae.

SPICE GUAVA.

The wood, when cut, gives off the odor of Hubbard Squash. The heavy timber makes good charcoal.

**Bucida Buceras** *Linnaeus*. Combretaceae.

GRI-GRI.

The wood from this large forest tree provides excellent timbers for building. It was used for making ox carts some years ago.

**Terminalia Catappa** *Linnaeus*. Combretaceae.

ALMOND.

The wood is of good quality for general construction, but the tree is so prized for its beauty that a living tree would never be cut down for timber.

**Psidium sp.** Myrtaceae.

PIGEON BERRY TREE, MOUNTAIN GRAPE.

The tree grows to forty feet in height. The wood is used for timbers in building, for charcoal and for fence posts.

**Tetrazygia angustifolia** (Sw.) *De Candolle*. Melastomaceae.

SPRATWOOD.

The wood is used for fence posts.

**Ardisia guadalupensis** *Duchassaing ex Grisebach* Myrsinaceae.

BREAKBILL.

The wood is used for charcoal and for fence posts, but the latter only last about two years.

**Manilkara nitida** (*Sessé & Moc.*) *Dubard*. Sapotaceae.

BULLET WOOD.

This wood is heavy, but is excellent for furniture, and now that it is scarce, for novelties for the tourist trade.

**Chrysophyllum sp.** Sapotaceae.

MASTWOOD.

The common name is due to the tall straight trunk. The wood is used for beams in general construction and the smaller pieces for fence posts and charcoal.

**Chrysophyllum pauciflorum** *Lamarck*. Sapotaceae.

PALMET.

The wood is excellent for house construction, timbers for boats, fence posts and charcoal.

**Beurreria succulenta** *Jacquin*. Boraginaceae.

CHING.

The wood is used for fence posts.

**Cordia alliodora** (*Ruiz & Pav.*) *Chamisso*. Boraginaceae.

COPPER.

The hard wood is used in making oar handles, cart-wheels, vehicles, furniture and in general construction. It was used for yokes for oxen in the old days.

**Cordia glabra** *Linnaeus*. Boraginaceae.

MANJACK.

This light wood makes fair charcoal.

**Cordia nitida** *Vahl*. Boraginaceae.

BASTARD MANJACK, BASTARD COPPER.

These two common names distinguish this tree from

*C. glabra* and *C. alliodora*, which are called Manjack and Copper respectively.

The wood is used for studding in building construction and for oar handles.

**Citharexylum fruticosum** *Linnaeus*. Verbenaceae.

FIDDLEWOOD.

The wood is pink when cut, but fades out in a few days. Adventitious buds develop profusely, filling the lower part of the tree with sucker growth. The wood makes good fence posts.

**Tabebuia pallida** *Miers*. Bignoniaceae.

CEDAR.

This wood is much prized for general construction.

**Tabebuia heterophylla** (*DC.*) *Britton*. Bignoniaceae.

CEDAR.

This tree provides excellent timber for house construction and boat building. The yoke piece of the rudder on sailing boats is usually made from cedar.

**Erithalis fruticosa** *Linnaeus*. Rubiaceae.

BAY TORCH.

The wood is used for fence posts.

**Exostemma caribaeum** (*Jacq.*) *Roemer & Schultes*  
Rubiaceae.

BLACK TORCH.

The wood is used for building wharves because marine worms will not attack it. It is the very best of the many woods used for fence posts.

**Genipa americana** *Linnaeus*. Rubiaceae.

RAT APPLE.



This tree is not common on St. John. The wood is hard and heavy and is suitable for general construction.

**Guettarda scabra** (L.) Lamarch. Rubiaceae.

GREENHEART.

This is not the Greenheart of British Guiana. The wood is used for fence posts, but it does not last well.

#### FIBRE PLANTS

**Coccothrinax argentea** (Lodd.) Sargent. Palmae.

TYPE PALM.

This common dwarf palm is a very important plant to the natives. Both the blades and petioles of the leaves are utilized in making baskets, hats, ropes, mats and fish pots.

**Trichostigma octandrum** (L.) H. Walter. Phytolaccaceae.

BLACK HOOPWOOD.

The wood is peeled and used in basketry, especially for the frames.

**Centrosema virginianum** (L.) Benth. Leguminosae.

BLUE WISS.

This very common vine is one of the most useful fibre yielding plants. The small stems are used for basketry, weaving, string and rope. This plant is also referred to under edible plants.

**Serjania polyphylla** (L.) Radlkof. Sapindaceae.

BLACK WISS.

The small stems are used for making thongs, ropes and mats. This is the fibre which is always utilized in braiding the "rope" which connects the fish pot to the fish pot buoy.

**Daphnopsis caribaea** *Grisebach*. Thymelaeaceae.  
MAHO.

The inner bark is naturally woven in such a manner that pieces several yards long can easily be stripped off. These are very strong. They are braided into rope.

#### ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

**Crotalaria retusa** (*L.*) *Swartz*. Leguminosae.  
EARRING PLANT.

The hard ripe black pods are used by the children to make earrings. There is enough spring in the stem end of the pod to hold them on.

**Crotalaria verrucosa** *Linneaus*. Leguminosae.  
EARRING PLANT.  
Pods used as above.

**Phaseolus lathyroides** *Linnaeus*. Leguminosae.  
The large purple flowers are used for decorative purposes. This plant has garden possibilities.

**Gliricidia sepium** (*Jacq.*) *Steudel*. Leguminosae.  
MADRE DE CACAO.

Of considerable decorative value, this species is much more important as a food plant for cattle. (See food plants).

**Spondias Mombin** *Linnaeus*. Anacardiaceae.  
PLUM.

A fine shade tree. (See also food and wood plants).

**Terminalia Catappa** *Linnaeus*. Combretaceae.  
ALMOND.

One of the finest shade trees of the warmer regions. The leaves turn a beautiful orange at the close of the wet season. (See also under food and wood plants).

**Jacquinia Barbasco** (*Loefl.*) *Mez.* Theophrastaceae

No local name.

This tree is particularly notable for the fragrance of its flowers.

**Plumeria alba** *Linnaeus.* Apocynaceae.

FRANGIPANI.

The fragrant white flowers are used for decoration.

**Exogonium repandum** (*Jacq.*) *Choisy.* Convolvulaceae.

This common vine with its striking clusters of red flowers is particularly notable along the trails in January. It is sometimes transplanted from the wild to the houses as a porch runner.

**Ipomoea carnea** *Jacquin.* Convolvulaceae.

This large red-flowered morning glory is a common beach runner.

**Ipomoea tricolor** *Cavanilles.* Convolvulaceae.

MORNING GLORY.

Several acres of this "heavenly blue" in full bloom running over the fields, trails and shrubs at Christmas time furnished a natural profusion of color not easily described.

**Jacquemontia pentantha** (*Jacq.*) *Don.* Convolvulaceae.

WILD DAISY.

This is one of the bright spots of the island flora. The small vine is very common in fields and hedgerows. It bears a profusion of bell-shaped blue flowers, about one inch across, and blooms continuously.

**Merremia dissecta** (*Jacq.*) *Hallier filius.* Convolvulaceae.

NIO.



A beach runner. Flowers white with purple stripes.

**Merremia umbellata** (L.) Hallier filius. Convolvulaceae.

No local name.

A beach runner.

**Lantana involucrata** Linnaeus. Verbenaceae.

Growing on rocks at the sea side. Lilac flowers and dark purple fruit. An excellent decorative shrub.

**Leonurus sibiricus** Linnaeus. Labiatae.

The axillary whorls of pink-purple flowers makes this a good garden plant.

**Spathodea campanulata** Beauvois. Bignoniaceae.

AFRICAN TULIP TREE.

This very showy tree with large scarlet flowers is commonly planted for decoration.

**Randia aculeata** Linnaeus. Rubiaceae.

CHRISTMAS TREE.

This small tree, with open branching, bears many small, tough, dark blue-green waxy leaves. The flowers are small, white and very fragrant. This is the local Christmas tree. Decorated with colored shells and sea urchins it is quite festive.

**Verbesina alata** Linnaeus. Compositae.

The deep orange flowering heads suggest excellent garden possibilities.

#### NOXIOUS PLANTS AND WEEDS

**Argemone mexicana** Linnaeus. Papaveraceae.

THISTLE.

This is one of the prickly-poppies, not a thistle. It

thrives in the open fields, quickly spoiling good pasture land if not eliminated.

**Leucaena glauca** (*L.*) *Bentham*. Leguminosae.

WILD TAMARIND.

This weedy shrub rapidly takes possession of any territory available. It has overgrown some of the trails rendering them impenetrable. (See also under edible and wood producing plants).

**Acacia riparia** *Humboldt, Bonpland & Kunth*.

Leguminosae.

CATCH AND KEEP.

A very common and rapidly spreading vine. The stems are covered with small retrorse barbs, like tiny cat's claws, which cause severe skin lacerations. Public enemy number one of St. John.

**Cuscuta americana** *Linnaeus*. Convolvulaceae.

YELLOW LOVE.

This dodder infests many species of the island flora. At times the individual plants cover the vegetation on several hundred square feet of ground. It is also a medicinal plant.

#### MISCELLANEOUS USEFUL PLANTS

**Bambusa sp.** Gramineae.

BAMBOO.

The small stems serve as fish poles. Large stems, five inches in diameter, are cut into sections for floats, for fish pots and for seines. The mature dried stems are used in general construction, as poles for small craft, and in many incidental ways.

**Caesalpinia divergens** *Urban*. Leguminosae.

NICOL, NIKKER NUT.

This large climbing shrub sometimes covers the Sea Grape and other trees at the back of the beaches. The large pods contain almost spherical, hard coated, grey seeds about the size of Concord grapes. The children use these as marbles and for other games.

**Crescentia Cujete** *Linnaeus*. Bignoniaceae.

GOURD TREE.

This is the well known calabash. The hard shell of the fruit, which may attain a diameter of twelve inches, is used for dippers, dishes, vessels, cups, trays, toys, novelties for tourists and for ash trays. This plant is also referred to under medicinal plants.





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