

Vitex canescens Kurz

Pha Sian

(LAMIACEAE)

It is a deciduous, pioneer tree growing up to 12 meters tall.

Where does it grow?

It is native to Assam, Bangladesh, Cambodia, south-central and southeast China, the East Himalaya, Laos, Myanmar, New Guinea, Thailand, Tibet, and Vietnam.

What are its distinguishing characteristics?

Bark: creamy-brown, shallowly cracked & flaking, inner bark pale yellow often with orange spots. **Leaf:** trifoliate or digitate with 3-5 leaflets, 5-16x2-7 cm, narrowly ovate or lanceolate with tapering tip & pointed base, untoothed or with shallow rounded teeth. Young shoots densely covered with soft yellow-grey hairs, mature leaves thin, finely hairy at least below. Side leaflet stalks 0.5-1.2 cm, end one much longer, main stalks 3-8 cm, finely hairy. **Flower:** white or pale yellow, sometimes with a pinkish tinge, in branched clusters (thyrses) at the end of twigs & axils of fallen leaves, to 15 cm. Individual stalks slender, 2-4 mm, densely hairy, without leafy bracts. Calyx +2 mm, hairy outside. Corolla +4 mm, hairy outside. **Fruit:** 0.6-1.5 cm, ripening yellow then black, oval to slightly pear-shaped, with a flat calyx at the base.

Why is it a framework species?

It also attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies, while its fruits provide food for birds and small mammals

How are saplings grown?

Collect ripe fruits between April and June. Remove the seeds from the fruits and sow them in germination trays. No special pre-sowing treatment is required. GP 10%, MLD 23 days.

How should saplings be planted and cared for?

Plant the sapling in a hole twice the size of the container. Saplings should be planted at least 1.8 m apart from each other. Apply 50g of fertilizers at the time of planting. Continue weeding and applying fertilizers at 6-8 weeks intervals throughout the 1st and 2nd rainy seasons. Make sure planted saplings do not become shaded by neighboring trees.

What can the species be used for?

It is commonly used for its medicinal properties, such as treating fever, inflammation, and digestive issues, and its wood is occasionally used for biofuel and small construction purposes.

