

Acaju-catinga

Cedrela fissilis

Other Names: Acaju-catinga, Basálkina, Cedro, Cedro Batata, Cedro Blanco

Family: Meliaceae

Natural Range: South and Central America

IUCN Conservation Status

Vulnerable (VU)

Acaju-catinga is a large deciduous tree found in Central and South America, growing in semi-deciduous Atlantic forest. It can grow up to 45m in height and its trunk can be up to 100cm in diameter. It has yellow-green flowers. The species has a wide native range and historically it was abundant in these native countries. However, over exploitation and habitat loss has led it to be threatened in most of these countries except Paraguay and Suriname. The native populations of the species in Ecuador, Colombia and in Amazonian Peru are small and only a few populations (if not individuals) are thought to remain in Panama and Costa Rica.

Cedrela fissilis has suffered from over exploitation for its high quality timber, with at least 7,916 m³ of timber being traded between 2008 and 2015. Much trade of the timber will be local and illegal logging of the tree also occurs, so volume of timber traded will be much higher than records show. The wood is used to make plywood, sculptures, models, frames and doors and is also used for construction. The species also has significant medicinal use, being shown to have antimalarial, bacterial and diuretic properties. The bark can also be used as a treatment for leucorrhoea and can also produce an aromatic oil.

The Atlantic forest habitat of the species is one of the most threatened in the world causing further suffering to the tree species. This forest is at risk from conversion to urban areas, pastures and plantations. This has resulted in an estimated population decrease of 30% over three generations for the species. Habitat decline and population decimation lead to the species being assessed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List.

Working with local partners, Jardim Botânico Araribá GTC are working to have the species protected in living collections by 2021. There are also plans to produce a diverse seed bank of the species, distributed amongst multiple partners in the region.

The Global Trees Campaign was a partnership between Fauna & Flora International and Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

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