

Adopt a tree at the Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden



Illustration of *Amherstia nobilis*

«Fleurs, Fruits et Feuillages Choisis de l'Ile de Java» (1863-64)

Berthe Hoola van Nooten

Bruxelles, C. Muquardt, 1880.

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By adopting a tree you will support the Garden in its conservation work and help it become a place of discovery.

Here is an initial selection of trees. Most are young trees that we have just planted, some are awaiting a sponsor so they can be added to the Garden's collection and a few are more than one hundred years old, planted when Pha Tad Ke housed the Viceroy of Luang Prabang's hunting lodge.

FOR A GARDEN CONSERVATORY

These are rare or threatened species that must be protected or reintroduced.

Mangifera flava - ANACARDIACEAE - €2,000

Wild mango

Lao name: Mak muang pa

Mangifera flava is a rare species of wild mango that only grows in Laos and neighboring regions of Thailand and Vietnam. It is no longer cultivated for its small, tart fruits and deforestation is pushing it to the edge of extinction.

By chance, three magnificent, hundred-year old trees decorate the courtyard in front of the former hunting lodge. We need to protect these specimens and ensure this rare wild mango propagates in other parts of the Garden.

Dalbergia cochinchinensis - PAPILIONACEAE - €200

Thailand Rosewood

Lao name: Kha nhoung

Thailand Rosewood has a very limited distribution, only being found in Indochina and Thailand. It produces a magnificently veined, reddish wood that is highly sought after, especially by furniture makers, as it is hard but easy to work.

As a result, overexploitation is turning Thailand Rosewood into an endangered species. However, its reintroduction is greatly facilitated by the fact that the species grows relatively quickly for a hardwood, with seedlings reaching a respectable size after only twenty years.

Afzelia xylocarpa - CAESALPINIACEAE - €300

Beng

Lao name: Mai te kha ou Khar

Also prized for its beautiful red wood, *Afzelia xylocarpa* is another species threatened with extinction by extensive commercial exploitation. The forest beside the Garden used to contain several wonderful examples of this beautiful tree but they have now been felled. We plan to replant these trees as part of the reforestation program for the slopes at the foot of the hill. The Chinese have prized beng trees since ancient times, as the grain of its wood often forms animal shapes.

Areca catechu – ARECACEAE - €50 (for 400 specimens throughout the city €2,000)

Betel nut palm

Lao name: Ton mak

The tall, svelte silhouette of the betel nut palm used to be a common sight in Luang Prabang; however, this elegant palm tree is disappearing from the landscape now that betel nut quid is no longer used and the tree is no longer cultivated. In association with the municipal authorities and Souphanouvong University, the Garden has undertaken to launch a propagation and reintroduction program so these beautiful palms will once again become a common sight towering above the houses and pagodas.

FLOWERS & FRAGRANCES FOR A GARDEN OF THE SENSES

Butea monosperma - PAPILIONACEAE - €200

Flame of the forest

Lao name: Ton chan

With its magnificent vermilion flower clusters, which bloom at the beginning of the dry season, *Butea monosperma* has long been associated with fire. It is a sacred tree for both Hindus and Buddhists. For Hindus, its tripartite leaves evoke the trinity of Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva. Although it is well known to older people in Laos, it is rarely planted now and deserves to regain its place amongst the country's indigenous ornamental trees.

Saraca indica, *S. declinata*, *S. dives* - CAESALPINIACEAE - €300

Asoka tree

Lao name: Si 'soup ou Khăm phä ma

Bursting with bouquets of bright-orange or orangey-yellow flowers, *Saraca* are extremely decorative trees. All three of these closely related species have religious importance for Hindus and Buddhists.

The best-known species, *S. indica*, is famous in Indian under the name Asoka, which means "sorrow-less". It is the tree of Shiva and some say that Buddha was born under an Asoka tree.

The flowers of the few old trees (*S. declinata* and *S. dives*) that are still to be found in the monasteries of Luang Prabang are used in offerings, but when they are felled, they are rarely replaced. As a result, their numbers need to be increased so they can be reintroduced. Particular care must be taken to preserve *S. dives* because it is only found in Laos and northern Vietnam.

Amherstia nobilis - CAESALPINIACEAE - €500

Pride of Burma

Discovered in Burma and dedicated to Lady Amherst, the wife of the Governor General of India (1823-1828), *Pride of Burma* is one of the most beautiful tropical flowering trees. It is sometimes called the orchid tree due to the elegance of its long, crimson inflorescences. The species is probably extinct in the wild but it has been preserved in parks and gardens.

Mimusops elengi - SAPOTACEAE - €200

Bakula

Lao name: Phi koun ou Sä koun

At dusk, these discrete little star-shaped yellow flowers exude a sweet perfume with the bewitching scent of vanilla. It is not surprising that bakula trees were often planted near temples throughout the region, from India to Bali. Only a few specimens remain in Luang Prabang, mostly in the garden of the Royal Palace, so it is not easy to find the flowers needed to prepare certain offerings. Its fruit is edible and the oil extracted from its seeds was formerly used in lamps.

FOR A GARDEN OF DISCOVERIES

Lao Benzoin - STYRACACEAE - €200

Styrax benzoin, *S. benzoides*, *S. tonkinensis*

Lao name: Kham nha:n

Lao benzoin is renowned as a top quality resin that has been used for making perfume since antiquity. Sometimes known as Siam benzoin, it was exported at the beginning of the century via Thailand because of the prohibitively high taxes imposed at the Cambodian border. Benzoin is the resin of several species (*S. benzoin*, *S. benzoides* and *S. tonkinensis*) that are still tapped in the province of Luang Prabang and in northern Laos (Phong Saly, Houaphan and Oudomxay) by the indigenous Khmer-speaking Khmu and the Phong peoples. Benzoin trees grow very quickly, with trees reaching heights of 15 meters and diameters of 20 centimeters within ten years. The trees are tapped in October/November, towards the end of the rainy season, and the resin is collected in March/April. Each tree produces about 500 g of resin per year. The best quality resin is used for making perfume in Europe, most notably at Grasse, in France. Lower quality resins are used to make traditional medicines and incense.

Goniothalamus laoticus - ANNONACEAE - €400

Thai name: Khao lam do ng

Sometimes planted in northern Thailand for its beautiful and highly-perfumed yellow flowers, the species also has medicinal properties. Its roots and flowers are used to make traditional tonics and antipyretics. Recent research has shown the presence of components that are active against the parasite responsible for malaria.

Many thanks to Jean-Marie Bompard for researching and writing this text.

For further information:

PO Box 959, Luang Prabang, Laos - contact@pha-tad-ke.com - www.pha-tad-ke.com



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