



The flower

The fruit

The Takamaka tree

Calophyllum inophyllum is a magnificent native tree which reaches over 20m in height and has a broad trunk often covered in moss and lichen. It was incorrectly named the takamaka tree by slaves from Réunion and Mauritius who thought it was the same as their *Calophyllum tacamahaca* which it closely resembles. The stiff bright green and glossy leaves are tough enough to withstand the salty winds and are quite distinctive, with close parallel veins extending from the middle of the leaf to the margin. The clusters of fragrant white flowers have numerous yellow stamens and the round, green fruit which is 5cm long, hangs from a long stalk. Because the fruit floats and survives in the seawater for a long time, it is most likely that it arrived in Chagos by sea.

The wood from the both the *Calophyllum inophyllum* and the *Calophyllum tacamahaca* is tough and water resistant and so is used for the construction of small boats in many parts of the world.

A disease, triggered by increased temperature, is afflicting these trees in the Seychelles; so far the trees in the Chagos archipelago have been unaffected, which makes their conservation in these islands even more important.

There are two Takamaka Islands in the northern atolls of Chagos, one in Salomon and one in Egmont.

This beautiful tree seems like the tropical equivalent of the English Oak. It can be found in groves inland and also right beside the sea and is an important anti erosion species.

The Chagos Conservation Trust is a charity (Registered in the UK No. 1031561) established in 1992 whose aims are to promote conservation, scientific and historical research and to advance education concerning the archipelago. The Trust is a non political association.

If you would like more information on the publications or membership, please contact the Secretary simonhughes@hughes-mccormack.co.uk.

Visit www.chagos-trust.org