Goethalsia meiantha (Donn. Sm.) Burret

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TILIACEAE (LINDEN FAMILY)

Luehea meiantha, Goethalsia isthmica

Guácimo blanco

Native to the Philippine islands (Carpio 1992), *Goethalsia meiantha* now grows from Nicaragua to Colombia (Rojas 1983). In Costa Rica the species is common in the Sweet Gulf and the North Huetar region.

Goethalsia meiantha is a medium-size tree with a straight trunk and smooth bark that can reach a height of 15 to 45 m and 35 to 250 cm d.b.h. (Rojas 1983, Standley 1937). The tree grows in clayey soils at elevations from 270 to 900 m in areas where annual precipitation is 4000 mm and average temperature is 26 °C.

The wood is white when green, classified as light (specific gravity is 0.35) and soft and dries quickly without the appearance of major defects. It is easy to work and preserve and it finishes well; however, it has a low resistance to biodegrading organisms. It is used for fenceposts, handles for light tools, boxes, cases, broomsticks, and roof boards and in interior and exterior construction (Carpio 1992). The species ranks second in demand in the match industry, because it is very abundant and grows fast (Rojas 1983).

The flowers appear in August. They show axillary or terminal inflorescence, cyme type; the flowers are hermaphroditic, yellow, and small. The dark green fruits are jointed in threes, indehiscent, and winged. Each fruit is approximately 10 cm long and 6 cm wide, with two locules, and develops one or two pulpy, pyriform seeds. Few seeds are viable, because only one of the three joined fruits has an embryo (Moreira and Arnáez 1992, 1994).

The fruit is collected in February, April, and October. Fruits should be collected directly from the tree when they start to turn dark brown. The fruits are spread on the ground to dry and then planted.

1cm
2cm