

BARU

The barueiro (*Dipteryx alata* Vog.) is a tree species very productive which occurs in the Brazilian Cerrado, belonging to the *Leguminosae* family. In Brazil it is known by several popular names such as: barujó, baruzeiro, baruí, coco beans, cumbaru, cumaru and cumaru wood.

Both the fruit and the plant can be used in different ways. From the fruits the pulp can be consumed in the form of flour, and sweets and the seeds (the almond) after toasted, can be used in different culinary preparation like “paçoquinha, pé de moleque” (typical Brazilian sweets), biscuits, cakes, liquors and salted and toasted almonds, in addition to the extraction of oil of excellent quality. The fruits and leaves present a good value as forage when the plants are in pasture areas, and also the plants can provide shade to the cattle. The trunk of the tree presents wood with high density, compact and with high durability. The oil extracted from the almonds presents medicinal properties as well as the bark of the trunk. In addition, the plants can be used in landscaping and in the recuperation of degraded areas.

This species has a preference for places with soils well drained and for the phytophisionomy of Cerrados, showing irregular distribution in the landscape, and it can sometimes form large homogenous groups.

Flowering and fruiting occur in the beginning of the rainy season and the fruits are ripe in the following dry season. The fruit is a drupaceous vegetable, indehiscent, with an average length of 5.4 cm, and 32.2 g of mass, presenting a light brown general coloration. The mesocarp has a fibrous and dry pulp, the woody endocarp protects only one ellipsoid seed (the almond), with the average length of 2.5 cm and weight ranging from 1.1 to 1.5g. On average the almond represents 4.2% of the fruit.

The baru almonds show high crude protein (26.3%) and lipids (33.3%). The extracted oil is composed mostly by unsaturated fatty acids (75.6%). In its chemical constitution are also antinutritional factors (antitrypsin) which are easily destroyed by heat. Thus it is recommended the consumption of roasted almonds that taste similar to peanuts.

The commercialization of the baru fruits do not occur in fairs and road markets, the baru and its sub products are found in groceries and local markets in touristic cities of the state of Goiás, with high added value.

Considering the baru plant and fruits characteristics in the Cerrado biome, especially its rusticity, adaptability to different types of soil, productivity, different uses, possibility of consortium with pasture and mainly the functional characteristics of the almond, it can be inferred that this species shows a great potential to participate in ecologically more balanced productive systems.

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