

The red cotton tree is a medium- to large-sized tropical tree that usually grows to an average of 20-25 meters, with old trees up to 60 meters in wet tropical weather. < 0.870 > It has a straight tall trunk buttressed at base that bears conical spines to deter animal attacks. < 0.701 > It produces a capsule which, when ripe, contains white fibres, like cotton, which has been used as a substitute for cotton. < 0.158 > Crimson red flowers with five petals appear in the spring before the new foliage and are one reason that the tree is widely planted. < 0.303 > Trunk, very straight, bole up to 35 m tall, usually cylindrical, 2-3 m in diameter, usually with large plank-like buttresses up to 3 m high extending 1-2 m from the bole and with more or less horizontal main branches and often bracketed below to the stem. < 0.998 > Branches usually in whorls of 3. < 0.999 > The trunk and many of the larger branches are often crowded with large conical thorns 1-1.5 cm long, at least when young, bark smooth pale grey, young branches glabrous or pubescent. < 0.997 > Its leaves are deciduous in winter. < 0.396 >