Averrhoa carambola *Oxalidaceae*

S.E. Asia

**Common names: English: S**tar fruit, carambola.

**Ecology:** A small fruit tree now widely cultivated in the wetter tropics from West Africa to Florida and Queensland. A recent import to Europe where its decorative star fruit is valued. It is cultivated in some Uganda gardens. *A. bilimbi* is a similar tree.

**Uses:** Fruit, drink, jelly, detergent.

**Description:** A small tree but up to 7-10 m with dense branching to an upright rounded crown. BARK: small, bushy evergreens with drooping branches. LEAVES: pinnate with **5-11 pairs of pale green leaflets,** each oval about 1.5 cm, **folding up when touched.** FLOWERS: white or **mauve** in little cluster which **grow out of the main trunk, and woody branches** all over the tree. FRUIT: oblong and fleshy, about 10 cm long, strongly 5-angled (star- shaped when cut), yellow-orange and crisp when ripe. They look like wax the watery pulp acid sweet tasting something between apricot and passion fruit.

**Propagation:** Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), root suckers or direct sowing on site.

**Seed:** Extracted by crushing the fruit and hand picking the seeds. Seed can be obtained from Entebbe Botanical Gardens and Kampala city gardens.

**storage:** sow as quickly as possible.

**Management:** A mix of cultivars should be planted for cross pollination. Pruning is recommended and thinning of excess fruit in the early stage. Fast growing.

**Remarks:** Fruits are acidic but can be made into a pleasant drink or jelly. The juice removes stains from linen. Makes a handsome ornamental, so plant as a border or avenue tree. The timber is also useful.