

Sissoo Tree, Indian Rosewood, sarsoa

GENERAL

Origin	: sub-tropical, tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: vulnerable
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree
Height	: 10 m-25 m
Spread	: 6 m-9 m
Foliage	: semi-evergreen, deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: pale yellow
Size	: 10 cm
Period	: March - April
Smell	: pleasantly scented, sweet, flower

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 4 cm - 8 cm
Toxicity	: inedible

The Indian Rosewood grows to about 15 metres high, but may even reach double this size in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, where it originates. A beautiful lush, green tree for an arid landscape, *D. sissoo* is not often seen or well known in Arriyadh. Its Arabic name is sarsoa. Huge specimens used to grow near the water tower in Murabba. The crown is broad but not dense. The grey bark is furrowed lengthwise. The dense roots are dominated by a long tap root. The deciduous, alternate leaves are pinnate with three or five oval leaflets. Pale yellow, sweetly scented, small flowers grow on racemes in spring. They develop to pods. In the wild, it is found along riverbanks, but will tolerate drier conditions with several months of drought. Nodules on its wide-spreading roots fix atmospheric nitrogen and gradually improve the soil, but care should be taken not to damage the roots, since suckers may develop. Soils may range from coarse sand to alluvium, with a moderate salinity. Indian Rosewood does not easily compete, especially in terms of light. Before sowing, the seeds should be soaked in water. Root suckers may also serve to grow new plants, but cuttings require additional rooting hormones to thrive. In favourable conditions, the tree grows fast and is rarely infected by pests. The graceful upward branches and light foliage make *Dalbergia* suitable where filtered sunlight is required, for example on lawns. It is often planted in afforestation schemes and along roads. It is a good windbreak and aids soil stabilisation.

