

Carob Tree, *St. John's Bread*, *carob*, *qarmatt*

This evergreen tree, known in Arabic as carob and English as St. John's Bread, used to be native to the Arabian Peninsula as a wild variety. The Egyptians cultivated it 4,000 years ago. Nowadays, it can be found in the Mediterranean and in southern Europe. It is, however, only seldom seen in the Arriyadh region, sometimes on farms or in sheltered private gardens, and is probably more suitable for a coastal setting. Carob is a tall shrub or tree which grows up to 10 metres high with an equal spread, and has a dense crown. It is slow-growing and often multi-stemmed. There are both male and female trees (the pods appear on the latter). The dark-green leaves are pinnate with up to ten glossy oval leaflets. The flowers appear in small clusters in late summer on pale-yellow racemes directly on the stem and branches. The fruit is more imposing, and gives the tree its name. Huge, green and later dark-brown elongated pods hang all over the tree. *C. siliqua* grows on sandy, limey soil with good drainage and is highly salt-tolerant. It does require some humidity, but once established it is relatively drought-tolerant, because of its deep tap roots. It is sensitive to frost. In ancient times, people in the Middle East used to weigh gold and gems against the seeds of the carob tree, which was known in Greece as keration. *C. siliqua* is propagated by seed and cuttings. *Ceratonia* is a beautiful specimen shade tree for parks and private gardens. The root zone should be thoroughly soaked once per month. All parts of the tree create litter.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Vigour	: normal growth rate
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, aerial layering
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: vulnerable
Dessication	: vulnerable
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (1800 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree, shrub
Height	: 4 m-10 m
Spread	: 5 m-10 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pale yellow, pastel red
Size	: 10 cm
Period	: August - October
Smell	: scented, malodorous, gives freely of its scent, flower, sweet

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: pod
Fruit size	: 10 cm - 30 cm
Toxicity	: edible when processed, fruit