

# SPECIES: SOLANUM MAURITIANUM

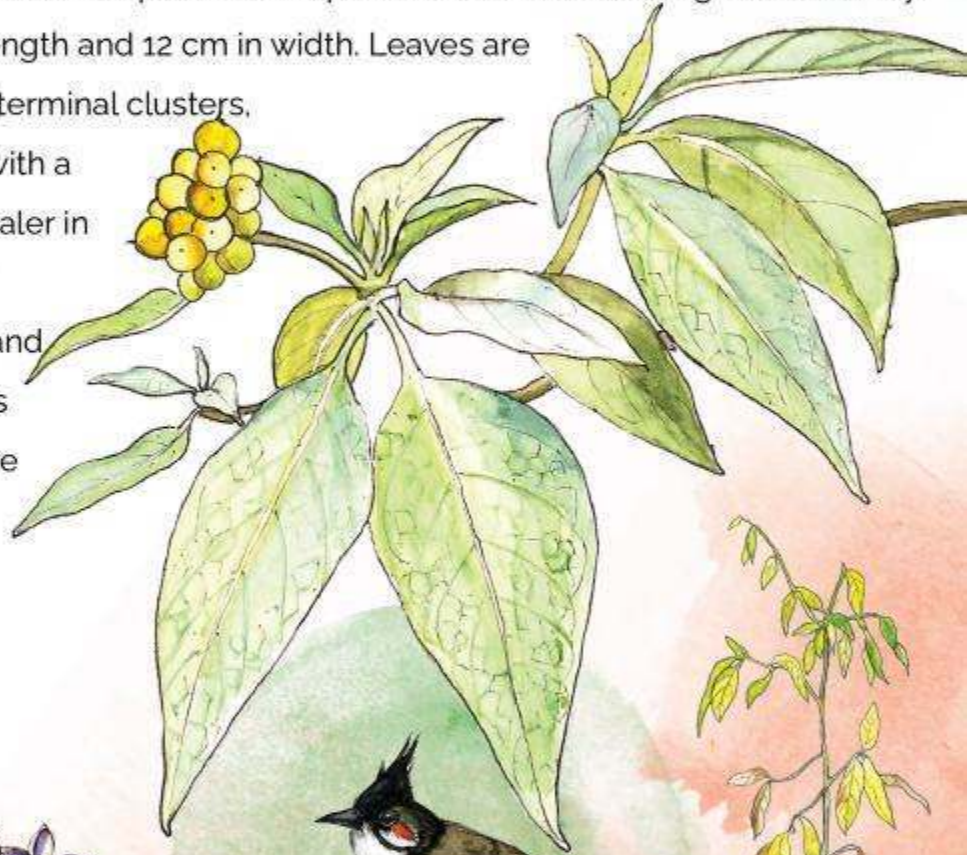
COMMON NAME: POTATO TREE / WILD TOBACCO  
TREE

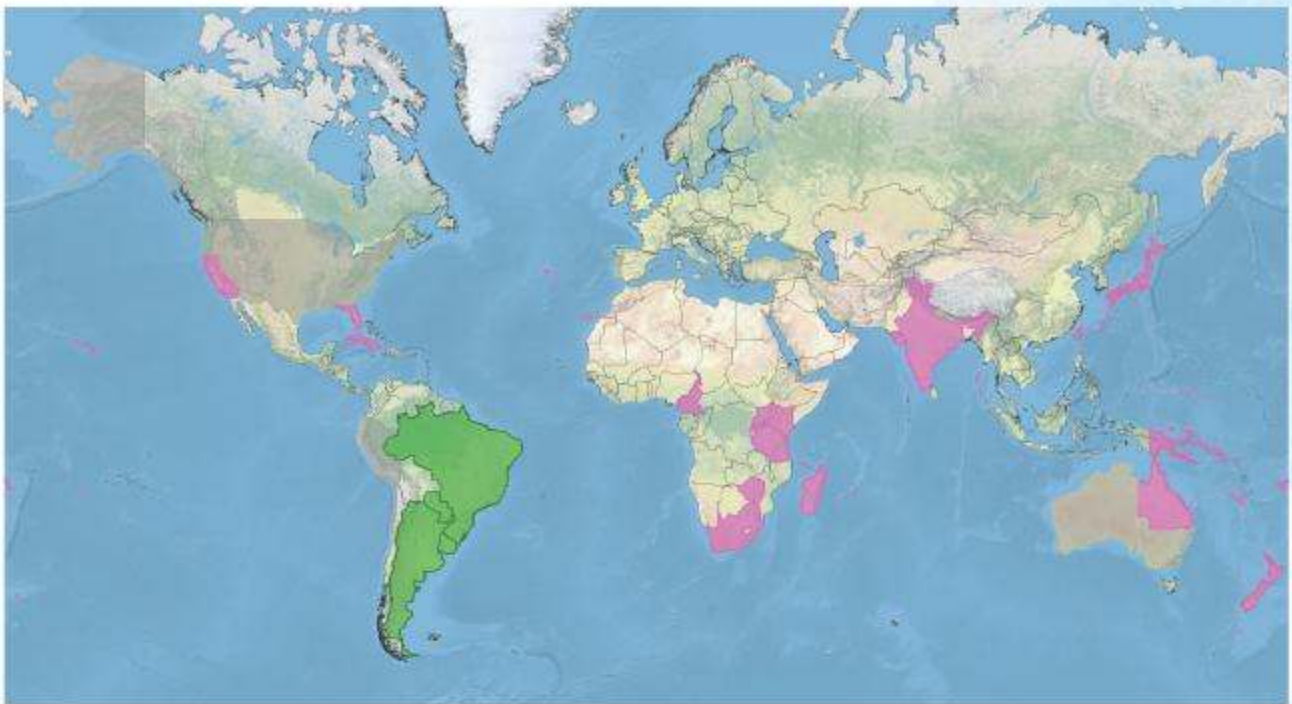
FAMILY: SOLANACEAE



## Plant Description

A perennial large shrub or tree that grows usually to a height of 2-4 m, and is seen up to about 2000 masl. It can form dense thickets. The plant has a straight stem with branches at the top, forming an umbrella-like rounded canopy. The stems and leaves are covered in dense short fine hairs, making them appear silver-green in colour. The plant has elliptic leaves that are arranged alternately. The leaves can reach up to 30 cm in length and 12 cm in width. Leaves are paler on the underside. Flowers are in terminal clusters, and are lilac-blue to purple in colour, with a star-shaped patch at the base that is paler in colour. The plant bears flat clusters of berry-like fruits that are green at first, and ripen to a dull yellow. The plant flowers multiple times a year, and the seeds are known to be dispersed by birds and some fruit-eating animals.





CABI, 2022. *Solanum mauritianum*. In: Invasive Species Compendium. Wallingford, UK: CAB International. <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/50533#toDistributionMaps> [accessed: 25/01/2022]

Introduced  
Native  
Origin not recorded

## ***Solanum mauritianum* SOLANACEAE**

**Origin:** South America

**Introduction:** The plant was introduced to India as an ornamental plant, though it is not known exactly when this was.

**Impacts:** The plant forms dense patches that negatively affect shade-intolerant native plants. It is adapted to establish rapidly in disturbed habitats, e.g., along roadsides, but it also spreads into tea plantations and along the margins of forests. It shows allelopathic effects against neighbouring plants. The plant (especially the fruits) are toxic for people. The fine hairs on the plant can cause respiratory problems in human beings.

**Management:** Management efforts are known only from South Africa, where chemicals like glyphosate, triclopyr, imazapyr are used. A sap-sucking lace bug, *Gargaphia decoris*, has also been tried in South Africa, but has been ineffective so far. Mechanical control includes uprooting young plants by hand. However, plants can resprout from broken fragments of root left in the soil. In the case of adult plants, the method of ring-barking (girdling) is used.