

# Chiute (Cerbera dilatata)

By Joseph Tuquero and Christine B. Laurent

### Introduction

Chiute is a small- to medium-sized tree that is endemic to the Mariana Islands. In Guam, it can be found growing in savannah and ravine areas. It can be found in a wide range of habitats.

#### **Names**

Other Common Names: Atilas, chuti, native plumeria

**Synonyms:** Unknown **Family Name**: Apocynaceae

### **Characteristics**

### **Appearance**

Chiute has plumeria-like flowers that are fragrant and attractive. The fruits, when still green, look like a small mango, and when mature, they turn from purple-maroon to brown. The fruits are smooth and shiny with tiny whitish spots. The seeds are poisonous.

### Leaf

**Shape**: Lanceolate **Arrangement:** Alternate

**Type:** Simple

### **Flower**

**Size:** 2.0-2.8 in.

**Color:** White and pinkish in the center

**Shape:** Stellate, star-shaped with five petals and tubular

corolla

**Arrangement:** Compound cyme **Flowering period:** Year-round

#### **Habit**

**Typical height:** Average 8-25 ft. Can grow up to 30 ft.

### Fruit

Type: Drupe

**Size:** Average 0.89 x 0.59 in.

**Color:** Green when immature and turns purple-maroon to

brown when ripe **Number of seeds:** 1

Edible: No, seeds are poisonous



Chiute flowers

### **Propagation**

Form: Seed and cuttings

Seed collection: Collect seeds from healthy and mature

fruits from either the tree or ground.

**Seed treatment:** Remove seed coat to hasten germination.

**Germination time:** 2 months

**Planting depth:** No deeper than twice the size of the seed.

**Pre-planting:** Seedlings from 1-gallon pots will be ready for transplant in 4-6 months after initial germination. Ensure shoot growth is at least 1 ft. above pot height and no taller than 2 ft., and ensure girth is at

least 0.50 in. in diameter.

**Special tips:** Ensure adequate water. Fertilize as needed.

#### **Production conditions**

**pH value:** 6.0-7.2 (slightly acidic - neutral)

Water: Do not overwater, but media should be kept moist

**Salt tolerance:** Low **Wind tolerance:** High

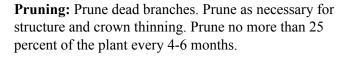
Soil characteristics: Well-drained soils Light: Full sun, can tolerate shade Space requirement: 8-15 ft.

Growth rate: 1-3 ft. per year

**Growth direction:** Upwards, crown spreading **Fertilizer:** For outplants, apply small amounts of complete fertilizer once every 3-4 months for one year.



Chiute leaves



### **Risks**

Near surface roots: None Limb breakage: Medium

Special considerations: The milky sap from the tree and

other plant parts may be poisonous.

**Pests:** Oleander hawk moth, wild pigs (rooting)

## Uses for this plant

Chiute is recommended for reforestation of grasslands and urban forestry projects in the landscape and has other uses as well.

**Agroforestry:** Landscape and urban forestry projects; reforestation of grasslands

Wildlife: Food source

### **Medicinal:**

- After childbirth, leaf decoction can be used for an aromatic bath
- Bark, leaves, and latex can be used as purgative
- Fruits, excluding seeds, can be used for rheumatism.

**Other uses:** Inner bark can be used as fiber. Seed oil can be used for lamp oil.



Chiute fruit



Chiute seed



Chiute seedlings

#### **REFERENCES**

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