

TREE PROFILE

Corporación Ambiental La Pedregosa

Common Name: Saladillo Rojo	Scientific Name: <i>Caraipa llanorum</i>	Family: Clusiaceae
Region: Endemic to the Orinoco River basin and to Vichada	Size: Up to 20 meters tall and with a trunk diameter of 75 cm	Habitat: Grows in the inundation and gallery forests and savannah
Leaves: Simple, alternate, distichous, lanceolate, 14 x 4.5 cm	Bark: Externally cracked, grey to brown color	Phenology: Flowers in September, seeds in March and April
Basic Density: Between 0.57 and 0.65	Foliage: Clear Green with thin texture	Propagation: By seeds

Uses: The *Saladillo rojo* is a tree that is greatly prized for its wood by residents of Vichada. At present it is not being cultivated, with all logging being from natural sources. The primary use of the wood is construction, followed by artisanal uses and the making of a colorant from the bark. The wood has a dark red or reddish brown color when cut, which changes to a silvery grey as it dries and is exposed to sunlight. The wood is not ant resistant, which makes it a poor choice for applications in contact with the soil. However, it is used extensively for walls and house frames, but not for posts. Artisans have traditionally made various objects and furniture with *Saladillo* wood, including river canoes. The seeds of the tree provide food to local birds, especially parrots. Scarlet macaws and oropendolas birds are often seen nesting in *Saladillo rojo* trees.



Typical *Saladillo rojo* tree



Saladillo rojo seeds

Growth: The tree has abundant seeds every year, which usually fall within close proximity to the parent by wind. It is common to see a group of *Saladillo* growing together, hence the Spanish term *Saladilla*. In the dry season *Saladillo* trees may be exposed to savannah fires, but generally speaking appear to be fire resistant unless young or damaged. The trees are of moderate growth, averaging 20 years to maturity in natural settings. With fertilizers this growth rate may be faster. The trees usually have a straight trunk for the first 5 or 6 meters, after which the crown branches out in various directions.

Pressures: While the *Saladillo rojo* is presently not listed as vulnerable or endangered, uncontrolled logging is taking its toll. The tree is usually easy to access, as it likes to grow on the edges of inundation forests, making it an easy to harvest building material source. With the rapid development of forestry, ranching and other land use projects in Vichada, the tree is also being used by uninformed people for fence posts, despite the fact that it rarely lasts more than one year in wet soil conditions. The tree is also an easy source of firewood.



Logging of Saladillo rojo



A typical Saladillo in Vichada

Recommendations: The pressure factors make it important to learn how best to plant and cultivate *Saladillo rojo*, so as to remove some of those pressures. The species has promise as a forestry tree that could replace introduced species, as it is adapted to the region. Only the firm *Maderas del Orinoco* is cultivating the tree in Venezuela. At *La Pedregoza*, we propose to conduct studies and field projects dedicated to learning how best to cultivate the tree for forestry use and for replanting in natural settings in Vichada, so as to encourage others to help with its conservation. This would include becoming a certified seed bank for the species. More knowledge of this species is needed for landscape restoration projects in the Orinoquia, due to the increasing number of mining and petroleum exploration activities in the region.



The La Pedregoza Environmental Corporation is a non-profit NGO dedicated to the conservation of native species in the Orinoco River basin, and the administrator of the La Pedregoza Natural Reserve. We welcome individuals and businesses who would like to assist us in the conservation and protection of native tree species and other Orinoco flora and fauna. For more information please contact us at trees@pedregoza.org

La Corporación Ambiental La Pedregoza es una ONG sin ánimo de lucro, dedicada a la conservación de especies nativas de la cuenca del Río Orinoco y administradora de la Reserva Natural de la Sociedad Civil La Pedregoza. Se da la bienvenida a personas y empresas que deseen ayudar en la conservación y protección de árboles nativos y otras especies en la Orinoquia. Para más información contacte a arboles@pedregoza.org