

# DANGEROUS PLANTS



## THE DYNAMITE TREE



The scientific name for the Dynamite Tree is *Hura Crepitans* and most commonly known as the Sandbox Tree. It is considered one of the most dangerous plants in the world.

It is an evergreen tree home to tropical regions of North and South America including the Amazon Rainforest. It has also been introduced to parts of Tanzania (Eastern Africa), where it is considered an invasive species. It is distinct because of its smooth bark covered in many dark, pointed spines, which have led to another nickname: Monkey No-climb. The Sandbox Tree prefers wet soil and partial to full sun.



This is the reason for the nickname Monkey No-climb. Sandbox trees can grow up to 60 metre (200 feet).



This is the female flower; they grow alone in axils.

This is the male flower; they grow along spikes.



This is the Sandbox tree's fruit which explodes when ripe. They split into two parts, launching seeds at 160 mph. The tree's explosive fruit have led to yet another nickname: The Dynamite Tree. The fruit is technically edible, if you're okay with vomiting, having diarrhoea and cramps. So, it is definitely not wise to eat them.

### *Fun Facts*

- Central and South American natives use dried sections of seed pods, seeds, and tree spikes to make jewellery. The sections of seed pods are comma shaped.
- Fishermen have been said to use the creamy sap from the tree to poison fish as it is toxic. It can also cause an aggressive red rash on human skin and blindness if it comes in contact with the eye. The Caribs made arrow poison from its sap as well to hunt with.
- The fruit was once used for holding fine dry sand for blotting paper, hence the name 'Sandbox tree'.
- The wood is used for furniture under the name Hura.
- Oil extracted from seeds can be used as purgatives. The leaves are a reported cure for eczema, and other extracts can treat intestinal worms and rheumatism.