



Sterculia foetida (Kuvem ruk) on the ground of the grounds of St. Thomas Church Cansaulim. (Founded in 1581). Photo in May.



Kuvem ruk in front of St. Lawrence Chapel, Arossim. (Founded ca.1599.) Photo in January



Dried-up pod with exposed seeds.
The seeds also called Java olives, are oily and can be eaten raw or roasted.

The small reddish orange flowers have a disagreeable putrid smell.

Sterculia foetida is not indigenous to India but occurs in Tropical Africa, Madagascar, Malasia and Northern Australia, but it is now seen in many areas in S. India. According to some writers the wood was used in building lower parts of boats, perhaps the keel.

Yes, there is a huge tree in front of Holy Spirit Church in Margão. I have measured the diameters of all the three trees – at Margão, Cansaulim and Arossim. (The photographs above show the trees in Cansaulim and Arossim. there is also a younger tree grown from a seed next to the tree in Cansaulim). In fact, the one in Margão has the widest trunk, followed by that at Cansaulim and then Arossim. I have only three data points so far to make any positive correlation between the dates of founding of the churches and the ages of the trees. I understand there is also a tree in Rachol, which I have not visited. Since the Church in Rachol is the oldest it should be of interest to compare with the others. There is one in Colva which I hope to get the measurements during my next trip. It is not easy to determine the exact age of a living tree without professionally taking a core sample and counting the growth rings. This also can cause some damage to the trees.

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Addendum from GRN

<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=sterculia+foetida>

sterculia foetida

Poon \Poon\, n. [Canarese ponne.] A name for several East Indian, or their wood, used for the masts and spars of vessels, as [Calophyllum angustifolium](#), [C. inophyllum](#), and [Sterculia foetida](#); -- called also [peon](#).

Source: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc.

It is known from the history of Jesuits in Goa that several parish priests of Salcete served at various times in the old Canara district parishes associated with the Portuguese Padroado. The Jesuit parish priests would often carry with them some families of cooks, sacristans, etc who had served them in parishes to Mangalore, Basrur, and other parishes to which they were transferred. That explains the migration of some Goan families to Karnataka.. Similarly, the transfer of some plants may also have taken place from Karnataka to Goa. Some 16th -17th century treaties signed by the Portuguese with the rulers of Bijapur and Canara required them to supply the Portuguese shipyard a certain number of “Puna” trees used for ship masts. Perhaps *Kuvem ruk* had other usages as well?

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