

Terminalia oblonga



Cracking the Code: Propagating the Majestic Terminalia oblonga

The *Terminalia oblonga*, also known as the amarillo or guayabo de montaña, is a visually stunning tree native to Central and South America. Towering heights and a sprawling canopy make it a favorite for providing shade and grandeur in landscapes. But have you ever thought about growing your own? While not as common as other ornamental trees, propagating *Terminalia oblonga* is achievable with a bit of patience and the right knowledge.

Two Paths to Propagation

There are two primary methods of propagating *Terminalia oblonga*:

1. Seeds: A Test of Patience

- **Sourcing:** Obtain fresh seeds directly from the fruit, which resembles a small almond. Mature fruits fall from the tree, so look for them beneath the canopy.

- **Preparation:** Clean off any remaining fruit pulp and allow the seeds to dry thoroughly for a few days. This drying period helps prevent rotting.
- **Sowing:** Plant the seeds approximately 1 inch deep in well-draining soil. A mix of peat moss and perlite works well.
- **Environment:** *Terminalia oblonga* prefers warm temperatures and humid conditions. A greenhouse or a warm, sunny windowsill are suitable spots.
- **Germination:** Be patient! Germination can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months. Keep the soil consistently moist but not waterlogged.

Pros:

- Cost-effective way to obtain many seedlings.
- Seeds possess genetic diversity, potentially leading to stronger trees.

Cons:

- Germination rates can be inconsistent.
- The time required for a seedling to reach maturity is significantly longer.

2. Cuttings: A Shortcut to Success

- **Timing:** Take cuttings in late spring or early summer when the tree is actively growing.
- **Selection:** Choose healthy, semi-hardwood stems that are 6-8 inches long and have at least 2-3 nodes (small bumps where leaves emerge).
- **Preparation:** Remove the leaves from the lower half of the cutting. Dip the cut end in rooting hormone to encourage root development.
- **Planting:** Insert the cuttings into a pot filled with a well-draining rooting medium like vermiculite or a peat-perlite mix.
- **Environment:** Maintain high humidity and a warm

temperature around the cuttings. A humidity dome or placing the pot in a plastic bag can help.

- **Rooting:** Cuttings typically develop roots within 4-8 weeks. You'll know they've rooted when new growth appears.

Pros:

- Higher success rates compared to seeds.
- Resulting trees reach maturity faster.
- The new plant will be genetically identical to the parent tree.

Cons:

- Requires access to a healthy parent tree for cuttings.
- May produce fewer plants compared to growing from seed.

Nurturing Your Future Giant

Regardless of your chosen propagation method, young *Terminalia oblonga* trees thrive in a sunny location with well-drained soil. Water regularly, especially during dry periods, but avoid overwatering. Fertilize a few times a year with a balanced fertilizer to support healthy growth.

Propagating your own *Terminalia oblonga* is a rewarding endeavor that allows you to witness the fascinating lifecycle of this magnificent tree firsthand. With dedication and proper care, you can cultivate a towering testament to your gardening prowess that will provide shade and splendor for generations to come.