



Also known by many other names: Cattapa Leaves, Tropical Almond Leaves, Sweet Almond Leaves, Wild Almond Leaves, Sea Almond Leaves, Java Almond Leaves, Ketapang Leaves.

**DESCRIPTION:** Terminalia

Catappa is a large tropical tree in the Family Combretaceae. It is believed that the trees originate from India, the Malay Peninsula, or Papua New Guinea.

The tree can grow to 35m tall, with an upright, symmetrical crown and horizontal branches. As the tree gets older, its crown becomes more flattened to form a spreading, vase shape. The leaves can grow large, 15-25cm long and 10-14cm broad, ovoid, glossy dark green and leathery. They are dry-season deciduous; before falling, they turn pinkish-reddish or yellow-brown, due to pigments such as violaxanthin, lutein and zeaxanthin.

The flowers are monoecious, with distinct male and female flowers on the same tree. Both are 1cm diameter, white to greenish, inconspicuous with no petals; they are produced on axillary or terminal spikes. The fruit is a drupe 5-7cm long and 3-5.5cm broad, green at first, then yellow and finally red when ripe, containing a single seed.



**AQUARIUM USE:** This is where it gets interesting. You will discover that a lot of fish enthusiasts often use Indian almond leaves and rave of its benefits. The leaves natural antibacterial properties minimize the chance of bacterial infections, improve health, simulate the natural water quality environment of fish who hail from soft, acidic waters, stimulate breeding conditions and harden scales minimising skin diseases and pathogens. We have seen many proven cases of improved natural colouration of fish after the addition of these leaves (such as the bright redness of Rummy Nose tetras)

The leaves are considered organic and for aquarium use, they should be free from pollutants and chemicals that could kill fish. Like driftwood and peat, the leaves release heavy amounts of tannic acid. You may not like the look of the yellow water, but your fish will naturally benefit from its use. The tannic acids will considerably lower the pH+Kh levels. Allow one large leaf of 8-10cms per 10ltrs. It will take at least a month before the leaves will disintegrate where they should be removed and replaced. Removal of tannic acids is done by either use of activated carbon or doing plenty of water changes.

We at Aquatic Solutions have had great success and totally endorse this natural product for species such as Fighting Fish, Rams, Apistogrammas, Tetras (especially Cardinal and Rummy Nose), Rasboras, Pencilfish, Angels etc. We have seen remarkable results in certain hard water fish as well (such as some African cichlids) in treating fungal and bacterial infections where other chemical based medications have failed (We don't recommend using the almond leaves for prolonged periods for species that require hard water) Other firsthand benefits we have experienced in our holding tanks include heightened breeding activity with species such as Rams and Angels even spawning on the leaves themselves.

