

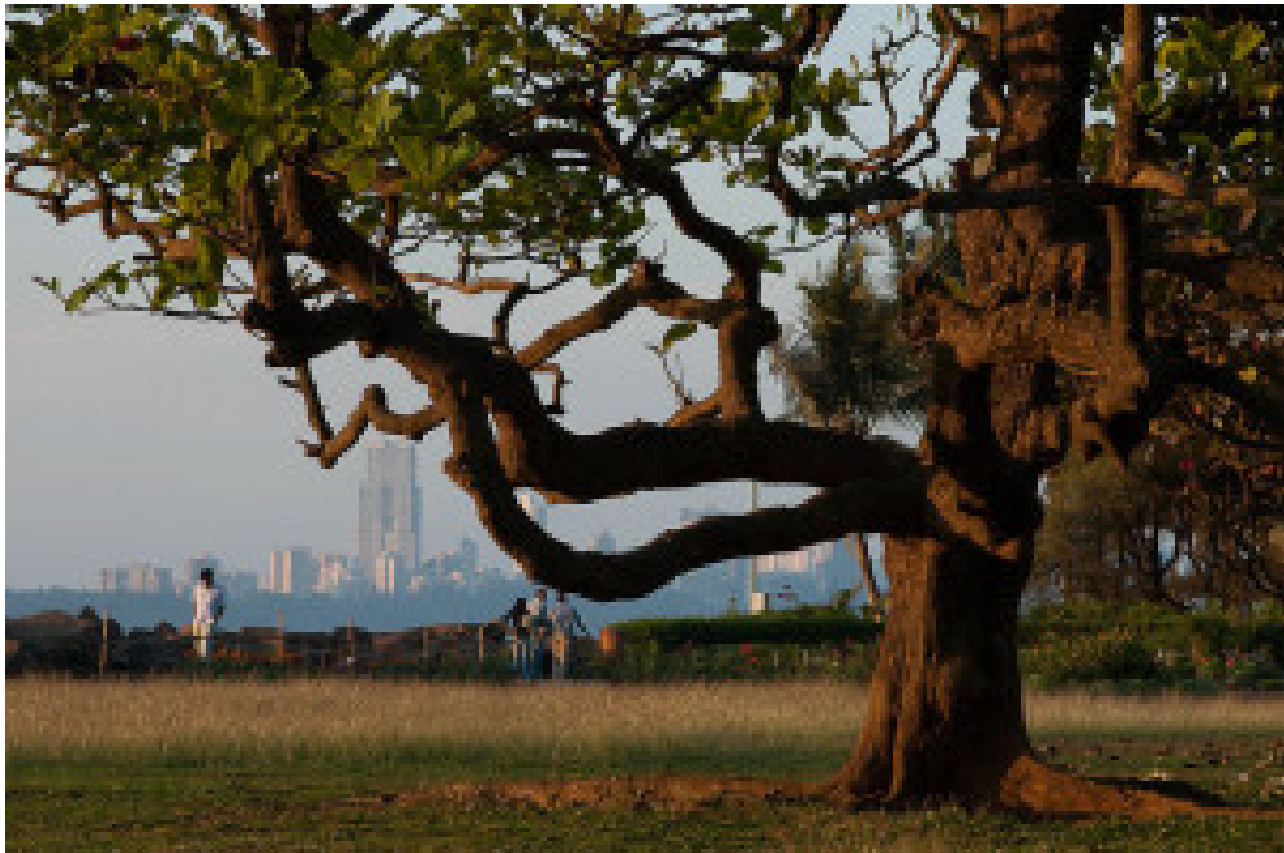
# Tropical Almond

I am rushing to get this posted because we leave Mumbai early tomorrow morning for two months of travel. The itinerary is more complicated than you can imagine and I am not sure how much time or energy I will have for blogging. So for my last Bombay tree, a quick post about tropical almond, *Terminalia catappa*.

Another really cool tree, tropical almond, unrelated to our edible almonds, is drought deciduous. I noticed that large leaves were turning red on some trees but not on others. Within a few days those trees dropped their leaves and as quickly as they fell young, new leaves appeared on the branches. Several days later other trees went through the cycle, each losing its leaves and leafing out over a period of days.

[Tropical almond](#) (*Terminalia catappa*), common on tropical beaches, disperses its seeds in small light-weight shells that float in the ocean until they wash up on distant shores, similar to [fish-poison tree](#) and the well-known coconut. Although it tastes like regular almond it is not related botanically.

I found some of the nuts and could not resist trying them. They were not that easy to get at and the reward, though tasty, was very small. [Selections](#) with larger edible seeds are grown.



Notice the horizontal branching and the shallow, anchoring roots.



Tropical almond trees on right and left, fish poison tree in center. The right hand tree has already put on new leaves while the one on the left is just beginning to drop them. (Jan. 30, 2013)



Tropical almond (left) has dropped its leaves. This is the same tree as ne on the ight in the previous picture. (Jan. 3, 2013)



This tree is actively losing its leaves. Gardeners are pruning it.

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Anchoring roots allow this plant to grow on sandy beaches.



Almonds

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Jim cutting the nut with the saw from a Swiss army knife.



Not much of a kernel



But it really did taste like an almond