

Koompassia excelsa

Abstract

The genus *Koompassia* comprises three known species, one of which is *Koompassia excelsa*. It is known as Tualang in the Malay dialect, which refers to 'the tree of swarming bees'. It is most often found growing naturally as an emergent tree in the tropical moist forest, and sometimes on cultivated areas in its native range from southern Thailand to Peninsular Malaysia, north-eastern Sumatra, Borneo and the Palawan. The Tualang tree is a large evergreen tree with a buttressed columnar bole, frequently unbranched for up to 30 m in height. The tree has a smooth and shiny bark, a dome-like crown made up of many small sub-crowns with gnarly branches, and imparipinnate or pinnately compound leaves. It was recorded as the tallest broadleaf rain forest tree growing up to 85 m in height and reaching up to 3 m in diameter at breast height. The tree is protected from felling in Borneo because of its significance in the local culture and mythical belief, and its value in sustaining the local honeybees which produce the Tualang honey which is appreciated for its therapeutic benefits.