

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Pigeon Pea (*Cajanus cajan*)

#### Quick Facts

**Origin:** Asia; probably India

**Description:** Perennial woody legume shrub to small tree that can grow up to 4m tall at maturity. Flowers and fruits peas in pods

**Uses:** Food; medicine

**Harvest:** Fall and Spring

**Flower:** Flowers are usually yellow, but can be between red and orange, too. Inflorescence in terminal or axillary racemes.

**Tolerance:** drought resistant; moderately cold hardy and can survive below 30F when mature; can grow in a variety of soils.



**General Description:** Pigeon Peas are woody perennial shrubs or small trees with deep, extensive root systems. They can get up to 4 meters tall at maturity. The leaves are alternate, pinnately trifoliate, and 15 cm long and 6 cm wide. They fruit heavily with compressed seed pods with between 2-9 seeds inside.

- **Native Origin:** Asia; probably India.
- **General History:** Pigeon Peas originated in southern Asia, probably India, but have been cultivated throughout Asia and Africa for thousands of years. Pigeon Pea was brought to the new world in post-Columbian times, and is currently cultivated in home-gardens and small commercial operations throughout the tropics and subtropics worldwide. Many different strains have developed over time. Pigeon Peas are used as a popular food crop in many developing countries. Besides being used as food, Pigeon Pea is also a great green manure and perennial forage crop for animals.
- **Distribution:** Tropical and subtropical regions in the Americas, Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and the Caribbean.

- **Season of Harvest:** Fall and spring (in Florida, USA).
- **Culinary Uses:** Ripe seeds are soaked in water for a few hours then boiled and eaten like beans, and unripe green seeds and seed pods are steamed and eaten as a green vegetable. Ripe seeds are also a source of flour, used split (Dhal) in soups, or eaten with rice. Tender leaves can be used as a potherb.

<b>Cajanus cajan</b> <b>Scientific Classification</b>	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Fabales
Family:	Fabaceae
Genus:	<i>Cajanus</i>
Species:	<b><i>C. cajan</i></b>

#### **Sources**

[http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/Forages/Media/Html/Cajanus\\_cajan.htm](http://www.tropicalforages.info/key/Forages/Media/Html/Cajanus_cajan.htm)

[https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/duke\\_energy/Cajanus\\_cajun.html](https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/duke_energy/Cajanus_cajun.html)

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