

National Tree - The Blue Mahoe

Our National Symbols are representative of our rich history and culture. They define us as a people – Jamaicans who are proud of where we are coming from.

The Blue Mahoe (Hibiscus Elatus)

The Blue Mahoe is the national tree of Jamaica. It is indigenous to the island and grows quite rapidly, often attaining 20m (66ft) or more in height. In wetter districts it will grow in a wide range of elevations, up to 1200m (4000 ft.) and is often used in reforestation.

The tree is quite attractive with its straight trunk, broad green leaves and hibiscus-like flowers. The attractive flower changes colour as it matures, going from bright yellow to orange red and finally to crimson.

The name mahoe is derived from a Carib Indian word. The 'blue' refers to blue-green streaks in the polished wood, giving it a distinctive appearance. The Blue Mahoe is so beautiful and durable that it is widely used for cabinet making and also for making decorative objects such as picture frames, bowls and carving. The inner bark of the tree is often referred to as Cuba bark because it was formerly used for tying bundles of Havana cigars. Cuba is the only other place where the Blue Mahoe grows naturally.