The baru tree species (*Dipteryx alata* Vog.) is known for its productivity in the Brazilian Cerrado, belonging to the Leguminosae family. In Brazil, it is known by several popular names: barujo, baruzeiro, baruí, coco beans, cumbaru, cumaru, and cumaru wood.

Both the fruit and the plant can be used in multiple ways. The fruit pulp can be consumed as flour, and the seeds (the almond) can be toasted for use in various dishes like “paçoquinha, pé de moleque” (typical Brazilian sweets), biscuits, cakes, liquors, and salted almonds, in addition to the extraction of high-quality oil. The fruits and leaves are also valuable for forage in pasture areas, and the trees can provide shade for cattle. The tree’s trunk has high-density, durable wood. The oil extracted from the almonds has medicinal properties and the bark of the trunk is used in landscaping and for the recuperation of degraded areas.

This species has a preference for well-drained soils and the phytophisionomy of Cerrados, showing irregular distribution in the landscape, often forming large homogenous groups. Flowering and fruiting occur in the rainy season, with the fruits mature in the following dry season. The fruit is a drupaceous vegetable, indehiscent, with an average length of 5.4 cm and a mass of 32.2 g, showing a light brown coloration. The mesocarp is fibrous and the dry pulp is protected by a woody endocarp that contains a single ellipsoid seed (the almond), with an average length of 2.5 cm and a weight ranging from 1.1 to 1.5 g. On average, the almond represents 4.2% of the fruit.

The baru almonds have a high crude protein (26.3%) and lipids (33.3%). The oil extracted is composed mostly of unsaturated fatty acids (75.6%). Its chemical composition includes antinutritional factors (antitrypsin) that are easily destroyed by heat, making roasted almonds a delicious alternative to peanuts.

The commercialization of baru fruits is uncommon in markets, and baru and its sub-products are found in local markets in Goiás with high added value.

Considering the baru plant and fruit characteristics in the Cerrado biome, especially its rusticity, adaptability to different types of soil, productivity, different uses, possibility of consortium with pasture and mainly the functional characteristics of the almond, it can be inferred that this species shows great potential to participate in ecologically more balanced productive systems.

Rosângela Vera  
Dr.  in Vegetal Production  
Professor of the Federal University of Goiás  
e-mail: vera@agro.ufg.br

Eli Regina Barboza de Souza  
Dr.  in Vegetal Production  
Professor of the Federal University of Goiás  
e-mail: elireginal1@gmail.com