Monoon longifolium (Syn. *Polyalthia longifolia*)

Common name: False Ashoka
Family: Annonaceae
Habit: Tree
Location: Central Lawn, Hostel
Distribution: Ashok is native to India and Sri Lanka. It is introduced in gardens in many tropical countries around the world. It is, for example, widely used in parts of Jakarta in Indonesia and the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

Description:
The weeping, branching habit of this 25-foot tall tree gives it a narrow columnar shape. Glossy green, long, narrow leaves have attractive wavy edges. Ashok is commonly seen as a lofty column, very graceful with its downward-sweeping branchlets and shining, green foliage; but sometimes wide-spreading slender branches issue from the straight trunk and form a compact symmetrical crown. The bark is smooth and dark greyish-brown. Flowers appear during March and April. For a short period — two or three weeks only — the tree is covered with a profusion of delicate, star-like flowers, which, being palest-green in colour, give the tree a peculiar hazy appearance. They grow in clusters from small protuberances all along the dark branchlets. Each flower, borne on a slim, green stem has a tiny calyx and six long, narrow, wavy petals arranged in two sets of three.

Uses:
The leaves are used for ornamental decoration during festivals. The tree is a focal point in gardens throughout India. The tree can be pruned into various shapes and maintained in required sizes. The flexible, straight and light-weight trunks were once used in the making of masts for sailing ships. Today, its wood is mostly used for manufacturing small articles such as pencils, boxes, matchsticks, etc. The oil of the seed has been confirmed to possess anti-oxidant, anti-lipooxygenase and antimicrobial activities, among others. This plant is used as an antipyretic agent in indigenous systems of medicine. Pharmacologic studies on the bark and leaves of this plant show effective antimicrobial activity, cytotoxic function, antiulcer activity, hypoglycemic activity, and hypotensive effect.