PLANT FACT SHEET

Castanea mollissima Blume

GENUS *Castanea* **FAMILY** Fagaceae

COMMON NAMES Chinese chestnut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Seeds

The seeds can be eaten. They are used both fresh and dried. They can be roasted or boiled. They are also used in cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A big tree. It grows 20-25 m tall. The trunk is 1 m across. The branches have short hairs but can also have long spreading hairs. The leaf stalk is 1-2 cm long. The leaf blade is oval and 10-17 cm long. It can be slightly hairy along the veins. The base of the leaf is rounded. There are coarse teeth around the edge. The male flower is 10-20 cm long. The cup is densely covered with spine like bracts. There can be 2-3 nuts in each cup. They are 2-3 cm across. The nuts are edible.

HABITAT

It is native to China. It requires a dry subtropical location. It occurs in North Vietnam from 500 to 2000 m altitude. It can grow on waste land, stony soil and acidic or limestone soils. In China it grows from near sea level to about 2800 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 5-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Two or more compatible varieties must be planted together to ensure cross pollination. Trees can be grown from seed. Seed need to be treated for 1-2 months with cold in a refrigerator then planted 5-7 cm deep. Plants can be grown by splice grafting.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedlings usually bear in 5-8 years. Grafted trees can bear in 2 years.

NOTES

All Castanea bear edible nuts. There are about 12 Castanea species. This is a cultivated plant. It is resistant to chestnut blight.

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