PLANT FACT SHEET

Cordia subcordata Lamarck & Poiret

GENUS *Cordia* **FAMILY** Boraginaceae

COMMON NAMES Sea trumpet, White bush apple

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Nut, Flowers

The fruit is eaten raw. It is also cooked and used as a vegetable.
The seeds are eaten.
The flowers are pickled or eaten as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A spreading shrub or tree, 2-15 m high. It spreads to 3-10 m across. The stem is erect and the bark is grey and slightly rough. It has cracks along its length. The leaves are broad and oval. They are 8-20 cm long and 5-15 cm wide. Sometimes they have 2 lobes near the base, making the leaf heart-shaped. On the lower surface of the leaf, there are fine hairs near the veins. The leaves are glossy green on top and paler underneath. The leaf stalks are long (3-5 cm). The flowers are orange. They form a tube 3.5-5 cm long and with 5-7 broad lobes which spread to 3-4 cm across. The flower heads are made up of 6-20 flowers, and they occur at the ends of branches. The fruit is 2-3 cm long, by 1.5-2.5 cm across. It is green or yellow. It hangs down and turns brown when ripe. There is a single seed inside, and it is 2-3 cm long. The fruit has a beak at the tip and an apple like texture, but fairly hard.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows near beaches, above high tide level, in vine thickets. It is usually from sea level up to 30 m altitude. It can grow up to 150 m altitude. It needs well drained, moist soils, in an open sunny position. It needs full sun. It can grow on sandy and clay soils as well as limestone rocky places. It does best with a pH of 6.1-7.4. It can grow on salty soils. It is drought and frost tender. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed needs to be sown fresh. Whole fruit can be sown or the ends can be clipped to quicken the germination. Hardened or woody fruit can be soaked for 24 hours before sowing. Seeds normally germinate in 3-4 weeks. Seedlings can be planted into the field after 6-8 months.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Young plants can grow rapidly. In Australia the tree flowers from February to March and fruits March to May.

NOTES

The tree had important cultural importance by people of the Pacific. There are about 300 Cordia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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