PLANT FACT SHEET

Pterygota alata (Roxb.) R. Br.

GENUS *Pterygota* **FAMILY** Malvaceae

COMMON NAMES Buddha's Coconut

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds

The roasted seeds are eaten.
The seeds also yield a fatty oil.
CAUTION: The seeds cause itch and sleep.

DESCRIPTION

A large deciduous tree. It grows 15-30 m tall. The trunk is 70-80 cm across. The trunk is straight and with only small buttresses. The branches are short. The crown is oval or column shaped. The bark is smooth and grey. It has shallow cracks. The young parts have rusty coloured hairs. The leaves have long leaf stalks. They can be 5-10 cm long. The leaves are broadly oval and 10-25 cm long by 7-15 cm wide. They are heart shaped at the base. They are wavy at the edge. There are 5-7 veins from the base. The leaves are clustered near the ends of branches. The flowers are small and have an unpleasant smell. The flowers are 1.5 cm across. They are purple with red streaks. They are in short clusters with a rusty covering. The flower sepals are thick and fleshy. There are male, female and bisexual flowers on the same tree. The fruit is a round woody capsule. It is 12.5 cm across. It has a fine mealy covering over it. It has many seeds. There are 40 seeds. These are in 2 rows and have wings. The fruit splits open along one edge.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in dense forest. In Vietnam it grows from 100 to 800 m altitude. It occurs on well drained clay soil or alluvial soil.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed. It is possible to use cuttings or air-layering.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The tree grows quickly. It can be lopped.

NOTES

Also put in the family Sterculiaceae.

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